

BLOOMFIELD TOWN PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT TO ZONING REGULATIONS

Date: April 5, 2022

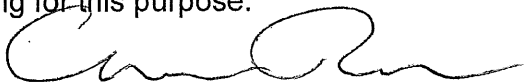
Aaron J Romano
Applicant (to whom notices will be sent)

860 335-4293
Daytime Phone #

55 Woodland Ave, Bloomfield, CT 06002
Mailing Address

aaronromano.law@gmail.com
E-mail Address

I (we) hereby petition for an amendment to the Bloomfield Zoning Regulations as described below, pursuant to Section 8-3 of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, and request that the Town Plan and Zoning Commission hold a public hearing for this purpose.


Applicant's Signature

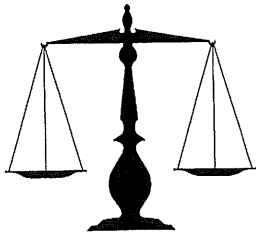
Enclosed herewith is the required \$260.00 fee for this petition.

Proposed amendment as follows (attach additional sheets if necessary):

RECEIVED

APR 07 2022

**PLANNING & ZONING
BLOOMFIELD, CT**



AARON J. ROMANO, P.C.

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Aaron J. Romano*
*also member of PA, and U.S.V.I. bars

April 5, 2022

Ms. Jennifer Rodriguez-Valentino
Director of Planning & Economic Development
Bloomfield Town Hall
800 Bloomfield Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Re: Agricultural Regulations/Agritourism

Dear Ms. Rodriguez-Valentino:

I hope you are well. I am the owner and operator of the Lion's Tale Farm located at 55 Woodland Avenue, Bloomfield. Enclosed are proposed zoning regulations for farms engaging in the commerce of agriculture-agritourism. These regulations are being submitted to close the gap in the current zoning regulations that limit the permissible activities of farms in Bloomfield.

There are four functioning farms in Bloomfield. Bloomfield is currently undergoing significant land development where open space is being converted to housing. Our town stands to lose its remaining privately owned open space to development if regulations are not passed to make farming a profitable enterprise. The neighboring towns of Simsbury, Granby, Suffield, and others have passed regulations to expand activities on farms to include agritourism. Farms are now a destination not just for people to buy produce but to enjoy open space and nature. Farms are sought after locations for yoga, meditation, art fairs, musical performances, weddings, etc. This is a result of market forces and has enabled many farms to stay in business.

I submit that the residents of Bloomfield value the balance between open space, development, and maintenance of the residential character of the neighborhoods. I believe that these proposed regulations balance these multiple interests. I look forward to discussing these further in a full hearing and am available by phone at 860-286-9026 in advance of the hearing.

Sincerely,



Aaron J. Romano, Esq.

Definitions Article 2, Section 2.2 Defined Terms

AGRICULTURE: “agriculture” and “farming” shall include cultivation of the soil, dairying, forestry, raising or harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity, including the raising, shearing, feeding, caring for, training and management of livestock, including horses, bees, the production of honey, poultry, fur-bearing animals and wildlife, and the raising or harvesting of oysters, clams, mussels, other molluscan shellfish or fish; the operation, management, conservation, improvement or maintenance of a farm and its buildings, tools and equipment, or salvaging timber or cleared land of brush or other debris left by a storm, as an incident to such farming operations; the production or harvesting of maple syrup or maple sugar, or any agricultural commodity, including lumber, as an incident to ordinary farming operations or the harvesting of mushrooms, the hatching of poultry, or the construction, operation or maintenance of ditches, canals, reservoirs or waterways used exclusively for farming purposes; handling, planting, drying, packing, packaging, processing, freezing, grading, storing or delivering to storage or to market, or to a carrier for transportation to market, or for direct sale any agricultural or horticultural commodity as an incident to ordinary farming operations, or, in the case of fruits and vegetables, as an incident to the preparation of such fruits or vegetables for market or for direct sale. The term “farm” includes farm buildings, and accessory buildings thereto, nurseries, orchards, ranges, greenhouses, hoopouses and other temporary structures or other structures used primarily for the raising and, as an incident to ordinary farming operations, the sale of agricultural or horticultural commodities. The term “aquaculture” means the farming of the waters of the state and tidal wetlands and the production of protein food, including fish, oysters, clams, mussels and other molluscan shellfish, on leased, franchised and public underwater farm lands.

AGRITOURISM: Agritourism comprises practices or activities on the farm incident to, ancillary to, or in conjunction with agricultural operations and with the purpose of generating income and/or attracting visitors to the farm to attend events or activities that are accessory uses to or directly involving the agricultural operation(s). Such accessory uses under this definition include, but are not limited to, educational events and tours, recreational activities, entertainment, and farmstay (short stay of less than 10 days where guests engage in farming activities).

FARM-BASED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES: Recreational offerings that are uniquely suited to occurring on a farm and may also include common outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the agricultural use of the farm. Examples of farm-based recreational activities that are uniquely suited to occurring on a farm include, but are not limited to: corn, sunflower and other crop mazes; hay, wagon and sleigh rides; animal petting areas; and seasonal pick your own crops including, but not limited to, fruits, vegetables, flowers and-trees.

Examples of farm-based recreational activities that are compatible with the agricultural use of the farm include, but are not limited to: hiking; bird watching; cross-country skiing; educational presentations; group meditation; drum circles; arts and craft fairs; and yoga.

FARM STORE: An establishment located on an active farm which sells agricultural products that may be produced on or off site. Examples of a farm store include, but are not limited to, a retail farm store, farm brewery, farm distillery, farm winery, and a farm restaurant.

FARM WINERY: Any place or premises that is located on a farm in which wine and or brandies is manufactured and sold and shall be limited to the production of not more than one hundred thousand gallons of wine in a calendar year.

FARM BREWERY: Any place or premises that is located on a farm in which beer and/or hard cider is manufactured and sold and shall be limited to the production of not more than seventy-thousand gallons of beer and hard cider in a calendar year.

FARM DISTILLERY: Any place or premises that is located on a farm in which distilled spirits or alcohol are manufactured and sold and shall be limited to the production of not more than ten thousand gallons of distilled spirits in a calendar year.

LIMITED FARM STORE: A retail establishment located on an active farm which sells agricultural products, the majority of which are produced on site.

AGRICULTURAL EVENT: A single day event connected to the agricultural undertakings to promote agricultural products and practices on the farm where the event is held. The event is an accessory use on a property having a principal agricultural or farming use. Includes fundraising events to directly benefit the farm.

NON-AGRICULTURAL EVENT: A single day event with a defined start and end time that is not directly related to agriculture with an expected attendance of over 200 persons. The event is an accessory use on a property having a principal agricultural or farming use.

Section 7.4. AGRICULTURE AND AGRITOURISM

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the regulation is to promote agritourism activities and uses in Bloomfield, while preserving farms and farmland, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens. Agritourism uniquely combines aspects of tourism and agriculture industries and provides opportunities for farms to diversify their incomes with activities and events related to agricultural. Equally, agritourism promotes sustainability to both new and existing farms and provides to the community financial, educational, and social benefits.

7.4.A. Farm Stores, Limited Farm Stores and Agritourism are subject to the following conditions:

1. May only be conducted on an active farm site.
2. The farming operation must have derived at least \$2,500 in gross sales or incurred at least \$2,500 in expenses related to such farming operation during the previous calendar year.
3. Activities shall be limited to the areas as shown on an approved site plan, including outdoor and indoor areas of the farm property. If any tents or temporary structures are proposed, these must be shown on the site plan. If new construction is proposed, the scale and design shall be compatible with the residential/agricultural area.
4. Parking areas shall be designed to accommodate the projected number of visitors. All parking areas must be shown on an approved site plan. On street parking shall be as specified by the Police Chief.
5. Additional outdoor lighting may be permitted provided evidence is submitted demonstrating such lighting will not result in glare or excessive light trespass on nearby properties.

7.4.B. The following are permitted by right:

1. Limited Farm Store subject to the following:

(1) The store may be open between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM;

(2) The store shall be confined to an area within a barn or similar structure. If new construction is proposed, a site plan application is for Commission approval.

(3) There shall be no seating provided for the public;

(4) The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited; and

(5) Activities or events other than those allowed in Section 7.4 are prohibited.

(6) A limited farm store that does not meet the above criteria shall be considered a farm store.

2. Farm-based recreational activities

3. Educational demonstrations and presentations

4. Farm Tours

5. Agricultural Events

(1) Up to fifteen agricultural events are permitted per calendar year, subject to submission of an application to the Director of Planning and Development for review and approval.

(2) Temporary accessory structures such as tents shall not exceed 4800 sq. ft. of floor area. Temporary structures shall not remain up for more than 8 months in a calendar year.”

(3) Music or live entertainment may be permitted in conjunction with an agricultural event subject to the following:

(a) The music shall begin no earlier than 10 AM and shall end no later 10 PM. The music shall be played at a level such that those in the event area as shown on an approved site plan are able to hold a conversation without raising their voices.

(b) When reviewing and issuing approval for an agricultural event with music or live entertainment, the Director of Planning and Development may set conditions on entertainment to mitigate potential negative impacts on surrounding properties. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, frequency, time of day, use of amplified equipment, proposed structures or tents to be used. If there is a disagreement between town staff and the applicant, the applicant shall be referred to the Commission for a decision. If the Commission determines Special Permit approval is required, the applicant shall comply with the criteria in Section.

(4) If the agricultural event does not comply with the above criteria, Special Permit approval shall be required per Section 7.4.C.

6. A layout plan, narrative including the type of products to be sold, activities to be conducted including type and number, hours of operation, duration of any tents to be used on site, and any other information as required by the Director of Planning and Development must be submitted so compliance with Section 7.4 may be determined. Required information shall be submitted at least seven days before the planned event. The applicant shall comply with the approval issued by the Director of Planning and Development. If there are any changes in the nature of the operation or what was approved, the applicant shall submit new information for review and approval by the Director of Planning and Development.

If the Director of Planning and Development determines a proposal exceeds what is permitted by right, the application shall be referred to the Commission. If the Commission determines a Special Permit is required, the applicant shall comply with the criteria in 7.4.C.

7.4.C The Commission may grant a Special Permit for the following, subject to the following criteria.

1. Farm Store subject to the following:

(1) A Farm Store may sell agricultural products, including but not limited to, fruits, vegetables, plants, and similar items, processed foods such as preserves, pickled foods, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, animal products and similar products, and related merchandise. The majority of agricultural products sold in the Farm Store are to be grown or produced on the property where the farm is located, but may be supplemented with products that are grown or produced in Bloomfield or other farms. The Farm Store may provide seating for the public and tables where food and beverages may be consumed. The Farm Store may also sell alcoholic beverages that are produced on-site from products that are grown or produced on-site or on nearby farms. The farm store may also sell alcoholic beverages that are produced on other farms. If a farm store sells alcoholic beverages it may be considered a farm brewery, farm distillery, or farm winery and is subject to the following: The farm brewery, distillery or winery shall use an average crop not less than ten per cent of a combination of grapes, fruits, hops, barley, cereal grains, honey, flowers or other fermentables grown or malted within the state of Connecticut in the manufacture of their product.

(2) The farm store shall be confined to an area within an existing barn or similar structure or, if new construction is proposed, the scale and design shall be compatible with the residential/agricultural area.

(3) Entertainment may be permitted in conjunction with a farm store provided the entertainment is clearly secondary to the farm store. Unless further limited by the Commission, live or recorded music and any other entertainment may not start prior to 10:00 AM and shall cease no later than 10:00 PM. If outdoor entertainment is provided, which is entertainment that is not located in a permanent structure, the entertainment shall be at a level where persons not located in the outdoor entertainment area can hold a conversation without raising their voices. The outdoor entertainment area must be clearly shown on a site plan. The Commission may set conditions on entertainment to mitigate potential negative impacts on surrounding properties. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, frequency, time of day, use of amplified equipment, outdoor lighting, proposed structures or tents to be used, duration of entertainment. Unless entertainment is specifically permitted within the Special Permit, it shall be prohibited.

(4) Events are subject to Section 7.4.B.5 and 7.4.C.2.

2. Non-Agricultural Events including but not limited to banquets, weddings, fundraisers, and other activities that are not directly related to the farming operation, are permitted by Special Permit. Such events are an accessory use on an active farm and are subject to the following:

(1) Outdoor events, including those in temporary structures, shall under no circumstances exceed fifteen per calendar year. When evaluating a request for outdoor events, the Commission may further limit the number of events if it is determined such events are likely to have a negative impact on nearby properties.

(2) There shall be no limit on the number of indoor events unless it is determined the event is likely to have a negative impact on nearby properties, in which case the Commission may place a limit on the number of indoor events allowed.

(3) Events may take place between 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM. The Commission may further limit the hours if such events are likely to have a negative impact on nearby properties.

(4) Live or recorded music or other entertainment may be permitted. Unless further limited by the Commission, live or recorded music and any other entertainment may not start prior to 10:00 AM and shall cease no later than 10:00 PM. The entertainment shall be at a level where persons located at the property line can hold a conversation without raising their voices. The Commission may set conditions on entertainment to mitigate potential negative impacts on surrounding properties. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, frequency, time of day, use of amplified equipment, outdoor lighting, proposed structures or tents to be used. Unless entertainment is specifically permitted within the Special Permit, it shall be prohibited.

3. When considering the Special Permit, the Commission may limit the size and scope of agritourism activities in relation to the size of the farm based on acreage and production. The Commission may also limit the size of the farm store, lighting, number of indoor and outdoor events allowed, number of events allowed per week, provision of entertainment, the hours of events, restroom accommodations, and may require periodic review for approvals granted for non-agricultural events and entertainment to mitigate negative impacts on nearby properties.

4. Overnight lodging may be permitted and limited to camping, trailers, tents provided dry privy, port-a-potty or similar accommodation is available to campers.

5. Campfires must be contained within a firepit with prior approval of the fire marshal.

7.4.D. Special Event, Multiple Day and other Conditional Permits

1. Special events or uses for a period of up to seventy-two (72) hours for any one occurrence, not otherwise permitted in these Regulations, may be permitted subject to issuance of a zoning permit by the Zoning Enforcement

Officer, provided all police, fire and other municipal regulations or requirements are complied with. Examples may include a fair, festival, automobile show, or arts and crafts show and may include temporary retail food vendors. Special events may be permitted up to a maximum of four times per property during each calendar year, with no more than one event permitted per month. If such an event will include multiple, adjacent properties, the limit shall apply to all properties.

2. The Zoning Enforcement Officer may place stipulations on any such permit which is issued to protect the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood. Special events shall not include those activities which are merely an extension of the principal use itself, such as a school graduation or athletic competition.

7.4.G. ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

1. Non-Compliance with Special Permit – Failure to comply with the documents, plans, terms, and/or conditions approved by the Commission as a part of the Special Permit shall be a violation of these Regulations. The Zoning Enforcement Officer shall notify the applicant in writing of the specifics of the non-compliance and shall provide a reasonable time period for compliance therewith. Unless there is full compliance within such time period, the Commission may, following a duly advertised public hearing, rescind, revoke, or modify such Special Permit.

Discussion Issues Regarding Proposed Agritourism Zoning Text Amendment

1. **Non-Agricultural Event:** Defined as activity “not directly related to agriculture *with an expected attendance of over 200 persons.*” This appears to be an immense loophole that gives farms free reign to have significant Non-Agricultural Events of fewer than 200 people with no oversight whatsoever. Unless the intention is that non-agricultural events with *under* 200 attendees are completely banned, ***all*** Non-Agricultural Events with over 20 persons, especially at night (after 5:00 pm), must fall within the definition.
2. **Number of Events.** Fifteen Agricultural Events (7.4.B.5(1)) and 15 outdoor Non-Agricultural Events (7.4.C.2(1)) is a total of 30 events—a full month’s worth. Moreover, farm events are obviously concentrated in later Spring, Summer, and early Fall months. Under the proposal, essentially every Spring, Summer and Fall weekend could have one, if not two events.

Accordingly, and respectful of the Agricultural nature of farms something akin to the following might be appropriate:

- The number of Agricultural events may be up to 15, but no more than 10 should be allowed to have music or live entertainment (as used in 7.4.B.5(3)(a));
- The number of Non-Agricultural Events should be limited to 10 and no more than 7 should be allowed to have music or live entertainment (as used in 7.4.B.5(3)(a)); and
- No more than 4 total events (whether Agricultural or Non-Agricultural) should be permitted in a single calendar month.

Finally, so that neighboring properties can properly plan for disruptive events on farm properties, any farm hosting Agricultural or Non-Agricultural Events should be required to make publicly available (whether on a publicly accessible website or subscription email list) a continuously updated list of all scheduled events.

3. **Noise Limit.** Throughout, reference to sound-level cutoff being at a level where persons “can hold a conversation without raising their voices” (*see, e.g., 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3), 7.4.C.2(4)*) is vague, insufficiently specific, and will no doubt lead to disputes and differing interpretations. It is unclear if the proposal is meant to override general town noise ordinances. The draft should be revised to expressly incorporate general town noise ordinances as an upper limit. Also, will farm personnel be required to be on-site to enforce the noise levels throughout the duration of each event?
4. **10:00 PM Cutoff.** Throughout, references to event ending times being no later than 10:00 pm (*see, e.g., 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3), 7.4.C.2(4)*) requires clarity on enforcement.

Historically, loud events have continued on Auerfarm well past 10:00, often to midnight or beyond. Will farm personnel be required to be on-site to enforce the cutoff time?

5. ***Requirements for Approval by Commission and/or Director of Planning and Development of approval of events.*** Historically, Non-Agricultural Events (such as weddings and banquets) have been significantly more disruptive to neighboring properties. However, there appears to be a disconnect between the appropriate level of scrutiny and approval required for Agricultural Events, and the blanket approval that may be contemplated for Non-Agricultural Events. Specifically:

- As to Agricultural Events, it appears from 7.4.B.5(3)(b) and 7.4.B.6 that there must be a separate application for each event.
- But the draft regulations are unclear as to whether 7.4.C.2 contemplates a similar case-by-case review process for *Non-Agricultural Events*. It appears that a *single* Special Permit may be intended to cover all such events in perpetuity. For example, 7.4.C.2 does not contain an analogue to 7.4.B.6, which clearly contemplates individual review of individual Agricultural Events.

As noted above, Non-Agricultural Events such as weddings and banquets have historically been significantly more disruptive to neighboring properties. Accordingly, the draft regulations should be amended to clarify that Non-Agricultural Events, like Agricultural Events, are subject to case-by-case review by the Commission and/or Director.

6. ***Music and Entertainment in Connection with a Farm Store.*** It appears from 7.4.C.1 that a farm may provide an unlimited number of occasions of music or entertainment “in conjunction with a farm store,” potentially up to 365 days per year. The amount of music and entertainment that a farm store may provide should be limited to 10 events that are not fully indoors.

7. ***Sanctions.*** Section 7.4.G should be modified to include the following addition:

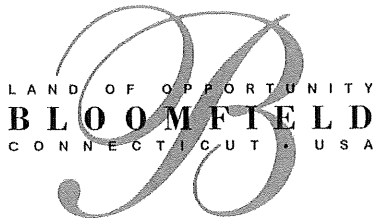
2. Nothing in subsection 1 above limits the right of the Zoning Enforcement Officer to issue an immediate cease and desist order or other appropriate order regarding any Agricultural Event, Non-Agricultural Event, or other farm activity as otherwise permitted by law.

8. ***Special Events.*** Given the inherently disruptive nature of the potential “special events” contemplated by 7.4.D., there should be an application process to ensure the public’s ability to review and comment on any such proposed special events.

9. ***Brewery/Winery/Distillery:*** A much more thorough review and analysis of the potential impact of the significant alcohol sales contemplated by the provisions related to Farm Wineries, Breweries, and Distilleries is necessary to understand the potential impact of these allowances. On their face, and without further information, they are concerning. If these are allowed at all, much more specific regulations are necessary.

10. ***Other Definitional Issues***

- ***“Indoors” and “Outdoors.”*** The draft regulations should specify that for the purpose of these regulations, “indoors” means fully enclosed (including four walls, roof, and closeable doors), and that any structure that does not fully meet this definition qualifies as “outdoors.”
- ***Farm-Based Recreational Activities:*** “Drum circles” and “arts and craft fairs” should not be classified as “compatible” with agricultural use; these are wholly separate, non-agricultural (and potentially disruptive) activities and should be considered Non-Agricultural Events.



Memorandum

To: Town Plan and Zoning Commission
From: Jennifer Valentino Rodriguez, AICP, Director of Planning and Development
Date: April 28, 2022
Re: Petition by Aaron J. Romano for a proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism

Applicant Aaron J. Romano has proposed a Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism.

While there are farm related definitions, agriculture and agritourism largely are not currently supported in the Bloomfield Zoning Regulations. Many farms, in particular small farms, remain viable through their ability to carry out activities that invite the general public to participate in addition to the normal farming operations. Agritourism can be a boost to the local economy and provide additional recreational, educational and entertainment activities for residents and tourists.

The applicant met with staff to review the current definitions as well as model regulations from towns such as Simsbury and Granby. Much of the language in the applicant's proposal reflects the language in those towns' regulations and some of the proposed language is modified.

Decision Considerations Section 9.6.C of your regulations provides the Commission with specific decision considerations for their review and decision making of regulatory changes. Some questions the commission might ask:

1. How does the amendment aid or contribute to the community?
2. How might the amendment impact the community?
3. How many properties and local farms would benefit from this regulation?
4. Does the amendment align with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)?
5. Does the regulation protect public health, safety, welfare, property values?
6. Does the regulation help to attain the purpose of the regulations and the POCD?

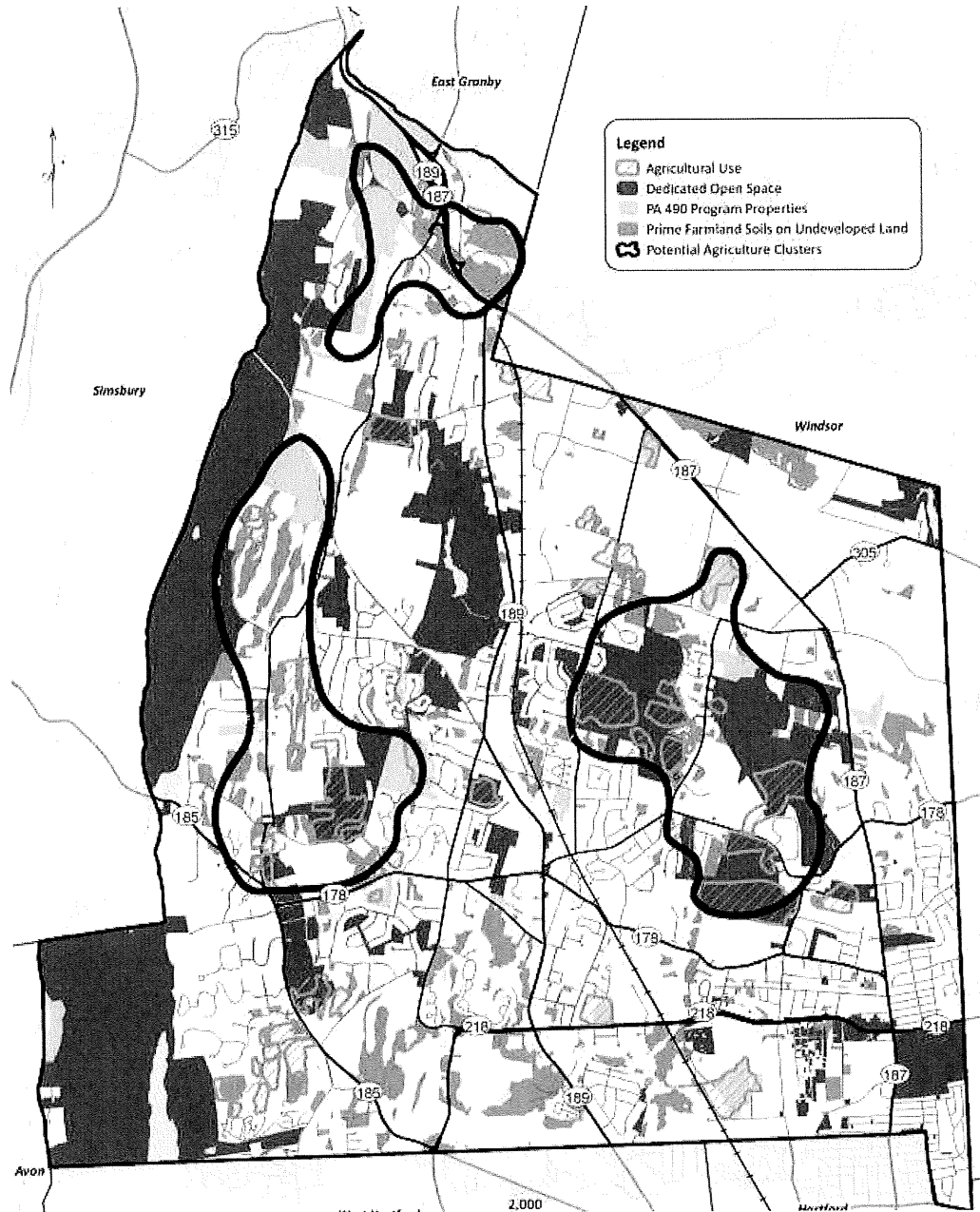
Plan of Conservation and Development On page 32 of the POCD the plan provides a number of goals such as to preserve farmland, agricultural heritage and specifically recognizes the importance of agritourism. "Agricultural tourism, or agri-tourism, is one alternative for improving the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities." Page 34 Strategies and New Approaches 3.11 states "Evaluating land use regulations for agriculture and agri-tourism" as a strategy to achieving farm viability and preservation. See link to POCD and map of agricultural areas below:

https://www.bloomfieldct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf7551/f/uploads/bloomfield_plan_of_conservation_and_development_0.pdf

Procedural notes: when the Commission acts on a regulatory change it must:

1. state the reason for the decision on the record
2. state findings on consistency with the POCD
3. establish an effective date

If the Commission is not ready to make a decision at the April meeting, it is suggested that the Commission schedule a special meeting to discuss the proposal. This is due to the large number of items on the agenda, the applications that are anticipated for the May meeting, and to give proper time for public input and participation.



Written Testimony on Public Hearings Agenda item 4a. 4/28/2022

Petition by Aaron J. Romano for a proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism.

Submitted by Garrett Phelan

37 High Hill Road

Bloomfield CT 06002

It is important for the town to see how best the farms and residential zones coexist in Bloomfield. That said, the town must not only deal with the present but have a vision that enhances the quality of living in the future as well.

I ask and argue that the Town Planning and Zoning Commission deny the Petition by Aaron J. Romano for a proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism

Questions and Concerns.

1. This petition impacts many people on many levels. It also could limit the vision of the town for not only the present, but for the future. It is a broad petition that needs more time to review, research and get more input from a variety of sources including residential neighbors that would be most affected by any change in or in any additional regulations. It would be wise to pause, and put a 2 year moratorium on any change, so the town leadership, the farms, community and effected residents can give more input and any unintended consequences can be flushed out as much as possible in advance. It may even be feasible and wise to create a commission.

2. One question is--When does a farm and its activities become an events venue rather than a practicing farm?

3. **Agritourism** definition is too broad especially "generating income and attracting visitors to the farm to attend educational events and tours, recreational activities, entertainment, and short stays..." Farms should be limited too **Farm-Based Recreational Activities** only that do not include music and live entertainment, especially any amplified sound. **Non-Agricultural Events** shpuld be limited to 4 outdoor events as identified as fundraisers for the farm. These could have live music and entertainment. These 4 events should be made public and easily available to the public in advance. The music, live entertainment and amplified sound element of the event must be limited to one 4 hour period. (one block of time).

The submitted text-amendment makes it possible to have 30 outdoor events that could include amplified music and life entertainment from 10am-10pm! Most of those events would most likely fall in a 7-8 month period of suitable weather for outdoor events. Additionally there is no limit to indoor events.

4. The broad-brush strokes of the text-amendment are elastic general and leave the burden of compliance and approval on individuals and neighboring residences instead of the farm.

5. This text amendment does not articulate the different types of farms and how drastically different they are in purpose, size, location and type (501c3, LLC, Inc, individual owner, etc)

Google Search of Farms in Bloomfield

Lion's Tale Farm and Retreat Center (LLC)

Auerfarm (501c3 Education)

Lion's Tale Farm (LLC)

Wades Farm/Wades Farm Fresh (family owned)

The 4 Five Farm (LLC)

Maple Hill Farms (INC)

Bloom Hill Farm (family)

Pepperidge Farm (Co.—Campbell Soup Company)

6. **Petitioner is owner of LLC Lion's Tale Farm and Wellness Retreat.** What other farms or people associated with farms in the area were consulted or used to create this petition? If I understand correctly, a 501c3 or non-profit farm cannot urge its members support or oppose legislation.

*Section 501(c)(3) organizations are restricted in how much political and legislative (lobbying) activities they may conduct. For a detailed discussion, see Political and Lobbying Activities. For more information about lobbying activities by charities, see the article Lobbying Issues **PDF**; for more information about political activities of charities, see the FY-2002 CPE topic Election Year Issues **PDF**.*

7. **AuerFarm** is a 501c3 and should not be not be covered by or included in this text-amendment. It is a tax-exempt educational facility.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exempt-purposes-internal-revenue-code-section-501c3>

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-501c3-organizations>

(SEE SEPARATE SECTION ON AUERFARM BELOW)

8. Noise Level. Does not articulate the sound level as at present-for residential zoning. Who determines who hears what during a conversation? Why not keep the noise ordinances as is for residential zone. Most of these farms abut residential locations.

9. Site of Outdoor music and live entertainment is not defined. How far from residential property should the venues perimeter be? No provision are made for the farm creating the most suitable sight on farm to hold outdoor events or events that create noise. Example on Auer Farm events location abutted residential property on one side and markedly further 1000 yds (?) from property line on other side of the farm. Is a Farm large enough or remote enough so that any event be 500-1000 yds from residential property line and sound is directed into the farm and not at residential properties?

10. There are ecological and environmental concerns. Impact on wildlife, farm life and quality of human life in nearby residences, noise levels, lighting levels, hours of operation and amount of human and vehicle traffic. These concerns need further study and input from nearby residents and others.

11. Advance Calendar Each season, no additions

A Farm should post (what I hope is a limited number) events by season three weeks in advance of the season.

12. In this document the burden to find the right balance falls on the property residential neighbors and not the farms who are the initiators of the events that might impact the area. It creates the largest number of events possible. It might be written the opposite way with the least number of events articulated and then a farm would have make the effort and create strong arguments why they should be allowed a Special one-time permit.

13. Auerfarm is special case and should not be included in whatever decision is made.

Auerfarm is a 501c3 and is different in purpose and regulations from the other farms in Bloomfield and the status quo of regulations should be held to after the Zoning and Planning Boards decisions last year 2021. (SEE BELOW LINKS CONCERNING 501c3.)

Auerfarm should be kept a residential zone. This stipulation was in fact visionary by the Auerbach family so the farm dedicated to learning, especially for children, could co-exist with increase in residence and at the same time preserve this valuable piece of land as a quiet natural area and farm for education in farming in nature. What a gem Bloomfield has. It should work hard to preserve this as a nature preserve area and a educational working farm.

This is a great opportunity for the town to take a close look at farms and what is the vision for the future.

One Vision for the Future of Auerfarm

What a wonderful opportunity as we look at AuerFarm 4-H Farm. Maybe it's time to have a vision that looks to the future that creates an ecological practicing farm and a nature preserve that creates a space from Auer Farm, the State Park, the reservoir, the Appalachian Trail all the way to Hueblein Tower and even into Penwood Forest. What a gem this would be as Bloomfield continues to grow and attracts families and businesses. The town could even create a hiking route and/or bike trail from near the center of Bloomfield to the farm. Now, that's a vision. Auerfarm would continue to be an educational farm offering education especially to children.

The town could collaborate and work with to create this incredible preserve in busy Bloomfield. Some creative thinking by the farm and town could make this happen. I'd certainly be willing to offer more ideas of how this incredible piece of nature could be preserved, additional fundraising and grants could support Auerfarm without having to create noisy events.

I think the town and Auerfarm would find their neighbors would support and worked hard to create such a vision for this gem of Bloomfield.

Here are some wonderful quotes from Auer Farm

Website:

"Auerfarm is 120 acre non-profit educational farm located in Bloomfield, CT. It is adjacent to Auerfarm State Reserve and the MDC reservoir. This huge expanse of preserved land brings with it unique wildlife and rare opportunities to explore nature in a densely populated region."

Our setting also lends itself to emotional healing and growth, as visitors experience the beauty of our trails, orchards, and animal pastures.

From April Mailing The Road Ahead:

...these glorious fields and sky and trees await your arrival

There's plenty in the world we may want to forget or at least leave back on Route 185 as we make our way up this bumpy road. A pandemic for starters. Not to mention today's headlines. Even a passing cloud on the horizon can turn our harried brains to climate change. So maybe some days Auerfarm may seem like a great escape. A place to abandon our baggage and head for the hills, the barn and the meadow beyond.

...

But maybe in these acres we can learn to turn off our cell phones and notice our posture, the way we hold our posture and take in fresh air. Maybe we can learn to feel the ground (earth) as we walk the ground.

And with this knowledge we can recognize Auerfarm as not only a place for ourselves, but especially for our children and grandchildren, for other people's children whose tender journey's echo the enduring beauty of this place.

LINKS AND DEFINITIONS CONCERNING 501c3.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exempt-purposes-internal-revenue-code-section-501c3>

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-501c3-organizations>

Definition of a 501c3 organization

A 501(c)(3) organization is a nonprofit organization established exclusively for one of the following purposes: charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, or preventing cruelty to children or animals.

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/1/501c3-organizations.asp>

Exempt Purposes - Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3)

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exempt-purposes-internal-revenue-code-section-501c3>

The exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3) are charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and preventing cruelty to children or animals. The term **charitable** is used in its generally accepted legal sense and includes relief of the poor, the distressed, or the underprivileged; advancement of religion; advancement of education or science; erecting or maintaining public buildings, monuments, or works; lessening the burdens of government; lessening neighborhood tensions; eliminating prejudice and discrimination; defending human and civil rights secured by law; and combating community deterioration and juvenile delinquency.

What is the difference between a 501C3 and a nonprofit?

These terms are often used interchangeably, but they all mean different things. Nonprofit means the entity, usually a corporation, is organized for a nonprofit purpose. 501(c)(3) means a nonprofit organization that has been recognized by the IRS as being tax-exempt by virtue of its charitable programs.

Requirements to Maintain 501(c)(3) Status

<https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/common-501c3-rules-regulations/>

The government intends for nonprofit entities to remain nonprofit entities, so they set up some rules that tax-exempt organizations must obey in order to keep their tax-exempt status. Not knowing the rules isn't an excuse for disobeying them. Those who try to blur or cross the line could end up with fines or face other legal consequences.

Here are six things to watch out for:

1. **Private benefit.** Organizations that apply for tax-exempt status cannot serve the private interests, or private benefit, of any individual or organization besides itself past an insubstantial degree. Therefore, a nonprofit may not permit any of its income or assets to benefit insiders, such as board members, officers, directors and important employees.

2. **Nonprofits are not allowed to urge their members to support or oppose legislation.** They may participate in a small amount of lobbying, but lobbying activities may not exceed a certain amount of the organization's total expenses.
3. **Political campaign activity.** A nonprofit organization may not financially support or endorse any political candidates verbally or in writing. They may not oppose candidates either. This rule applies to candidates at every level — local, state and federal.
4. **Unrelated business income.** Nonprofit organizations aren't allowed to generate too much income from a purpose that is unrelated to the nonprofit. An organization that regularly operates a trade or business that is unrelated to the nonprofit and makes significant contributions to the organization would need to pay taxes.
5. **Annual reporting obligation.** Nonprofit corporations still have reporting responsibilities, like the Form 990. They may also be responsible for things like tax on unrelated income, employment tax, excise taxes, and certain state or local taxes. Churches and other church-related organizations don't need to report income.
6. **Operate in accord with stated nonprofit purposes.** An organization that makes a big shift from being unprofitable to making money needs to re-file as a for-profit entity and to pay the applicable taxes.

Submitted by Garrett Phelan
37 High Hill Road
Bloomfield CT 06002

Discussion Issues Regarding Proposed Agritourism Zoning Text Amendment

1. **Non-Agricultural Event:** Defined as activity “not directly related to agriculture *with an expected attendance of over 200 persons.*” This appears to be an immense loophole that gives farms free reign to have significant Non-Agricultural Events of fewer than 200 people with no oversight whatsoever. Unless the intention is that non-agricultural events with *under* 200 attendees are completely banned, ***all*** Non-Agricultural Events with over 20 persons, especially at night (after 5:00 pm), must fall within the definition.
2. **Number of Events.** Fifteen Agricultural Events (7.4.B.5(1)) and 15 outdoor Non-Agricultural Events (7.4.C.2(1)) is a total of 30 events—a full month’s worth. Moreover, farm events are obviously concentrated in later Spring, Summer, and early Fall months. Under the proposal, essentially *every* Spring, Summer and Fall weekend could have one, if not two events.

Accordingly, and respectful of the Agricultural nature of farms something akin to the following might be appropriate:

- The number of Agricultural events may be up to 15, but no more than 10 should be allowed to have music or live entertainment (as used in 7.4.B.5(3)(a));
- The number of Non-Agricultural Events should be limited to 10 and no more than 7 should be allowed to have music or live entertainment (as used in 7.4.B.5(3)(a)); and
- No more than 4 total events (whether Agricultural or Non-Agricultural) should be permitted in a single calendar month.

Finally, so that neighboring properties can properly plan for disruptive events on farm properties, any farm hosting Agricultural or Non-Agricultural Events should be required to make publicly available (whether on a publicly accessible website or subscription email list) a continuously updated list of all scheduled events.

3. **Noise Limit.** Throughout, reference to sound-level cutoff being at a level where persons “can hold a conversation without raising their voices” (*see, e.g., 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3), 7.4.C.2(4)*) is vague, insufficiently specific, and will no doubt lead to disputes and differing interpretations. It is unclear if the proposal is meant to override general town noise ordinances. The draft should be revised to expressly incorporate general town noise ordinances as an upper limit. Also, will farm personnel be required to be on-site to enforce the noise levels throughout the duration of each event?
4. **10:00 PM Cutoff.** Throughout, references to event ending times being no later than 10:00 pm (*see, e.g., 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3), 7.4.C.2(4)*) requires clarity on enforcement.

Historically, loud events have continued on Auerfarm well past 10:00, often to midnight or beyond. Will farm personnel be required to be on-site to enforce the cutoff time?

5. **Requirements for Approval by Commission and/or Director of Planning and Development of approval of events.** Historically, Non-Agricultural Events (such as weddings and banquets) have been significantly more disruptive to neighboring properties. However, there appears to be a disconnect between the appropriate level of scrutiny and approval required for Agricultural Events, and the blanket approval that may be contemplated for Non-Agricultural Events. Specifically:

- As to Agricultural Events, it appears from 7.4.B.5(3)(b) and 7.4.B.6 that there must be a separate application for each event.
- But the draft regulations are unclear as to whether 7.4.C.2 contemplates a similar case-by-case review process for *Non-Agricultural* Events. It appears that a *single* Special Permit may be intended to cover all such events in perpetuity. For example, 7.4.C.2 does not contain an analogue to 7.4.B.6, which clearly contemplates individual review of individual Agricultural Events.

As noted above, Non-Agricultural Events such as weddings and banquets have historically been significantly more disruptive to neighboring properties. Accordingly, the draft regulations should be amended to clarify that Non-Agricultural Events, like Agricultural Events, are subject to case-by-case review by the Commission and/or Director.

6. **Music and Entertainment in Connection with a Farm Store.** It appears from 7.4.C.1 that a farm may provide an unlimited number of occasions of music or entertainment “in conjunction with a farm store,” potentially up to 365 days per year. The amount of music and entertainment that a farm store may provide should be limited to 10 events that are not fully indoors.

7. **Sanctions.** Section 7.4.G should be modified to include the following addition:

2. Nothing in subsection 1 above limits the right of the Zoning Enforcement Officer to issue an immediate cease and desist order or other appropriate order regarding any Agricultural Event, Non-Agricultural Event, or other farm activity as otherwise permitted by law.

8. **Special Events.** Given the inherently disruptive nature of the potential “special events” contemplated by 7.4.D., there should be an application process to ensure the public’s ability to review and comment on any such proposed special events.

9. ***Brewery/Winery/Distillery:*** A much more thorough review and analysis of the potential impact of the significant alcohol sales contemplated by the provisions related to Farm Wineries, Breweries, and Distilleries is necessary to understand the potential impact of these allowances. On their face, and without further information, they are concerning. If these are allowed at all, much more specific regulations are necessary.

10. ***Other Definitional Issues***

- ***“Indoors” and “Outdoors.”*** The draft regulations should specify that for the purpose of these regulations, “indoors” means fully enclosed (including four walls, roof, and closeable doors), and that any structure that does not fully meet this definition qualifies as “outdoors.”
- ***Farm-Based Recreational Activities:*** “Drum circles” and “arts and craft fairs” should not be classified as “compatible” with agricultural use; these are wholly separate, non-agricultural (and potentially disruptive) activities and should be considered Non-Agricultural Events.

April 26, 2022

Testimony re: *Petition by Aaron J. Romano for a proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism.*

As neighbors adjacent to one of the properties that would fit the definition of “farming” in these proposed zoning regulations, we have great concerns about some of the provisions of the proposed regulations and would urge TPZ to take its time to study the issues raised by these proposed regulations before adopting any such changes that would affect all Bloomfield farms that are currently covered by residential zoning.

Our primary issues are:

1. Although the definitions Article 2, Section 2.2 defines “agriculture” and “farming”, the list does not define a “farm.” Since there is no specified minimum acreage for a “farm”, a Bloomfield home with a backyard that maintains a beehive or two would be engaged in “farming” under these definitions and could then engage in agritourism, farm-based recreational activities, and non-agricultural events on their property. These regulations need to be much more specific as to what constitutes a “farm.”
2. Included in examples of a “farm store” in Article 2. Section 2.2 are wineries, breweries, and distilleries as well as a restaurant. The “farm store” may sell products that are produced on or off site. By that definition, a “package store” could become part of a farm store, selling products produced off-site. Would that circumvent the need for a license to sell liquor from the Dept. of Consumer Protection? Does Bloomfield really want to allow “farms” to be engaged in producing or selling distilled liquor, beer, or wine? We would think that the town or state should have much more control over where such activities are conducted.
3. Article 2, Section 2.2 defines an “agricultural event” as a “single day event connected to the agricultural undertaking to promote agricultural products and practices on the farm. This includes fundraising event to directly benefit the farm.” That seems to be a very appropriate activity for a farm to undertake. These are to be “permitted by right” according to Section 7.4.B. but are limited to “up to fifteen agricultural events” per calendar year, subject to submission of an application to the Director of Planning and Development for review and approval.” However, Article 7.4.C(1)(4) defines a “non-agricultural event” as “not directly related to agriculture with an expected attendance of over 200 persons.” Are these actually appropriate events for a farm to conduct? Would a non-agricultural event with an expected attendance of under 200 persons require no permitting or oversight? These proposed regulations are very unclear on that point. Farms would be allowed to hold up to 15 outdoor non-agricultural events (7,4,C2(1) per year.
4. Putting the two types of events together, a farm would be allowed to hold 15 agricultural events and 15 outdoor non-agricultural events per calendar year. Since most of these events are likely to occur in the seven months (approximately 28 weeks) between April and October, a farm could be hosting one or two of these

types of events every weekend during that period. There needs to be a monthly cap on the number of these outdoor events.

5. It appears that the proposed regulations would allow a single Special Permit to cover all non-agricultural events. This is far more permissive than the individual permits required for agricultural events.” These regulations should treat both types of events the same and require specific permits for both. In addition, a non-agricultural event for fewer than 200 people should also require a permit.
6. There are no specific, measurable sound level limits in these proposed regulations. The proposed definition of “where people can hold a conversation without raising their voices” is neither measurable nor enforceable. There is no reference to existing town noise ordinances. It is unclear how a “drum circle” as referenced in these regulations would not violate existing town sound level limits if held outdoors.

In summary, these regulations require much more careful consideration and Bloomfield TPZ, in consultation with the Bloomfield town attorney, should re-draft major sections of these regulations for clarity, enforceability, and reasonableness for their impact on those living in adjacent properties.

Linda Goodman
Eric Grossman
39 High Hill Rd.
Bloomfield

To: Town Planning and Zoning Commission, Town of Bloomfield

From: Seth and Melanie Klein, 35 High Hill Road, Bloomfield CT

Re: April 28, 2022, Meeting: Testimony on the proposed Agritourism Zoning Regulation Text Amendment

We write with regard to Aaron Romano's proposed "agritourism" text amendment to Bloomfield's Zoning Regulations. As set forth below, the proposed regulations are extremely vague; contain significant loopholes that must be addressed; and, to the extent that they are clear, could cause significant problems absent further study and revision. We appreciate the need as part of this community to allow for reasonable and carefully considered agritourism events to occur. But the proposed amendments need significant revision and should be rejected as written.¹

BACKGROUND

The proposed amendments will affect not only Mr. Romano's farm properties but all covered farm properties in Bloomfield. In that regard, we live at the upper end of High Hill Road, in close proximity to Auerfarm, which lies just to the south of our property line. Auerfarm's event pavilion (the Ensign-Bickford Picnic Pavilion) is very close to our and our neighbors' properties and homes, located less than 300 feet from the home that is closest to the farm, according to the legend on Google maps. In the last several years, we have noticed a marked increase in the frequency, scope, and volume levels of the outdoor, amplified events held on the farm. These events, which often have not complied with the decibel limits specified in the Town's noise ordinance, have been disruptive to the point that we have chosen, on more than one occasion, to leave our own home when we know that an event has been scheduled on a given date. In the past, the noise levels have been such that we have been unable not only to enjoy our home but to engage in daily activities such as doing work, watching a television show, or sometimes even sleeping when an event (such as a wedding) runs late into the night. While we appreciate the provisions in the proposed text amendment that attempt to address these concerns, these provisions lack sufficient clarity or specific mechanisms of enforcement.

THE PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT IS SIGNIFICANTLY FLAWED

The proposed Agritourism text amendment is significantly flawed and will lead to confusion and considerable undue disruption. In the interests of brevity in this written submission, each point is only summarized below, but can be expanded upon during oral testimony at the April 28 meeting.

First, the proposal may be attempting to allow events with as many as 200 attendees to be completely unregulated. Specifically, a "Non-Agricultural Activity" is defined on p. 2 of the

¹ As we and our neighbors have discussed with the Director of the Town Planning and Zoning Department, we remain willing to meet directly with Department staff and/or with Mr. Romano or other farm stakeholders to attempt to address these concerns and arrive at a proposal acceptable to all parties.

proposal as an activity “not directly related to agriculture *with an expected attendance of over 200 persons*” (emphasis added). If Mr. Romano’s proposal is that farms should have completely free reign to have Non-Agricultural Events of fewer than 200 people, with no oversight or limitation whatsoever, that is a gigantic loophole and wholly unreasonable. Unless the intention is that non-agricultural events with *under* 200 attendees are completely banned, *all* Non-Agricultural Events with over 20 (twenty) persons, especially at night (after 5:00 pm), must fall within the definition.

Second, the proposed noise limit standard is excessively vague and will lead to confusion and uncertainty. Throughout, the proposal references the volume limit as being at a level at which persons “can hold a conversation without raising their voices” (see, e.g., 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3), 7.4.C.2(4)). This is not a legal standard; indeed, it is completely subjective and essentially meaningless. It is unclear whether this proposal is meant to override general town noise ordinances and to replace the current objective decibel limit test, but such a result is both unfair and unworkable. The proposal must be revised to expressly incorporate general town noise ordinances as an upper limit. The regulations should also require farm personnel to have staff on site to enforce those noise limits throughout the duration of an event.

Relatedly, references throughout the proposal to events ending no later than 10:00 pm (see, e.g., 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3), 7.4.C.2(4)) require clarity on enforcement. Historically, loud events at Auerfarm have lasted well past 10:00, often to midnight or beyond. Farm personnel should be required to be on-site to enforce the cutoff time.

Third, the number of proposed allowed events is excessive. Under the proposal, a farm is allowed fifteen outdoor Agricultural Events (7.4.B.5(1)) and 15 outdoor Non-Agricultural Events (7.4.C.2(1)), for a total of 30 outdoor events each year—a full month’s worth. Moreover, here in New England, outdoor events are obviously concentrated in the later Spring, Summer, and early Fall months. Essentially every Spring, Summer, and Fall weekend could have one, if not two, events. The number of events must be more closely regulated, for example by setting a maximum number of events (whether Agricultural or Non-Agricultural) that may be held in a given month. Without a reasonable monthly limit, we and our neighbors will have repeated disruptions during the warmer months even when staying inside, as volume levels from farm events are typically loud enough to be disturbing even inside our homes. Moreover, our ability to enjoy our decks, patios, or other outdoor spaces will be adversely affected if an event may occur every weekend afternoon or evening all season long.

Fourth, the proposal is unclear as to the process by which Agricultural and Non-Agricultural events will be approved. Historically, Non-Agricultural Events (such as weddings and banquets) have been significantly more disruptive to neighboring properties. However, there appears to be a disconnect between the appropriate level of scrutiny and approval required for Agricultural Events, and the blanket approval that may be contemplated for Non-Agricultural Events. As to ***Agricultural Events***, it appears from 7.4.B.5(3)(b) and 7.4.B.6 that a separate application must be made for each event. But the proposed regulations are unclear as to whether 7.4.C.2 contemplates a similar case-by-case review process for ***Non-Agricultural Events***. It appears that a *single* Special Permit may be intended to cover all such events in perpetuity. For example, 7.4.C.2 does not contain an analogue to 7.4.B.6, which clearly contemplates separate

review of individual Agricultural Events. Accordingly, the proposed regulations should be amended to clarify that Non-Agricultural Events, like Agricultural Events, are subject to case-by-case review by the Commission and/or Director.²

Fifth, the provisions concerning Music and Entertainment in Connection with a Farm Store are excessively permissive. It appears from 7.4.C.1 that a farm may provide an unlimited number of occasions of music or entertainment “in conjunction with a farm store,” potentially up to 365 days per year. Any music and entertainment that a farm store may provide that is not fully indoors should fall within the regular allotment for Agricultural or Non-Agricultural Events as appropriate.

Sixth, a much more thorough review and analysis of the potential impact of the significant alcohol sales contemplated by the provisions related to ***Farm Wineries, Breweries, and Distilleries*** is necessary to understand the potential impact of these allowances. On their face, and without further information, they are concerning. If these are allowed at all, much more specific regulations are necessary.

Seventh, given the inherently disruptive nature of the potential “special events” contemplated by 7.4.D., ***an application process should be put in place*** to ensure the public’s ability to review and comment on any such proposed special events.

Eighth, to avoid any confusion or dispute, the draft regulations should specify that for the purpose of these regulations, “indoors” means fully enclosed (including four walls, roof, and closeable doors), and that any structure that does not fully meet this definition qualifies as “outdoors.”

Ninth, the proposed provision on sanctions (7.4.G) should be amended to ensure that the proposed regulations do not strip the Planning and Zoning Staff of their customary ability to issue cease and desist orders and take other appropriate enforcement actions. Specifically, 7.4.G should be modified to include the following addition:

2. Nothing in subsection 1 above limits the right of the Zoning Enforcement Officer to issue an immediate cease and desist order or other appropriate order regarding any Agricultural Event, Non-Agricultural Event, or other farm activity as otherwise permitted by law.

* * *

We thank you for your consideration, and we will be present at the Town Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to be held on April 28, 2022, to respond to any questions that the Commission may have.

² Relatedly, “drum circles” and “arts and craft fairs” should not be classified as “compatible” with agricultural use (as proposed on p. 1 of the draft). Although we have no personal experience with drum circles, we have attended many arts and crafts fairs over the years in settings ranging from city streets to town greens to indoors at convention centers. We find no reason to classify these types of events as Agricultural; these are wholly separate, non-agricultural, and potentially disruptive activities and should be designated as Non-Agricultural Events.

Sincerely,
Seth and Melanie Klein
35 High Hill Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002-2121

srk314@comcast.net
melanie@mbdklein.com

April 26th, 2002

Testimony re: *Petition by Aaron J. Romano for a proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism.*

Dear Members of the Town Planning and Zoning Committee, and Ms. Valentino-Rodriguez,

I am writing to you as a resident of High Hill Rd., which shares a border with Auer Farm off of Simsbury Rd.

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Romano's testimony that farms are not just an area to buy produce, but also a place to enjoy nature and open space. Not a week goes by that I bring my young son to the Auer Farm, where we enjoy watching the animals, and seeing the school children engage in their educational programs. We also enjoy attending their seasonal farm events that raise money for the farm. We are also longtime customers of Wade's Farm Fresh. Both of these farms are tremendous assets to our community. Mr. Romano stated that farms are a place to enjoy open space and nature, yet this proposed text amendment would allow for significant development and noise pollution on that very nature he seeks to preserve.

In light of this attempt to reclassify our farms as retail properties and event spaces, I urgently request that the committee continue to uphold the existing zoning laws. In the February 24th, 2022 meeting, the zoning board approved an event space in Wintonbury Mall, an existing commercial space. Reasons the board cited for approving this were:

- It's a rental facility and will not sell tickets to the general public
- It's to serve a maximum of 75 tickets
- The mall has a lot of parking, exits etc.
- It's already in a commercial facility

None of this criteria applies to farms. Many farm events operate under a ticket purchasing model. In terms of exits, the Auer Farm has only one narrow, unpaved road with a 5mph speed limit. With this proposed amendment, farms will operate with less restrictions and oversight than this recently approved event space, all within feet from residential neighborhoods.

Interestingly, the address of Lion's Tale Farm sits on a residential lot that houses a 2800 square foot house. The address is also listed as the law offices of Aaron J Romano. Lion's Tale Farm is an LLC incorporated just over one year ago. If this text amendment passes, it would seem like more farms seeking to serve as event spaces etc. would pop up on residential lots that otherwise would be confined to business districts.

If people wish to operate an event space, yoga studio, or brewery/bar, I hope that the Planning and Zoning Committee will encourage them to pursue those services in Bloomfield's business districts, which are specifically zoned for those activities.

Sincerely,

Jennie Kelly
31 High Hill Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 2:39 PM
To: Clare Kindall; Deshant Russell
Cc: Mark Kindall
Subject: RE: Comments for 4/28/2022 Agenda, Item 4.a - Agritourism regulation proposal

Deshant,
Please confirm that the below has been added to the agritourism regulation testimony.
Thank you.
Best,
Jen

From: Clare Kindall <clare.kindall@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 10:09 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Cc: Mark Kindall <mpkindall@gmail.com>
Subject: Comments for 4/28/2022 Agenda, Item 4.a - Agritourism regulation proposal

Re: Agenda of April 28, 2022, Item 4.a "Petition by Aaron J. Romano for proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism

Dear Members of the Town Planning and Zoning Committee and Director of Planning, Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed agriculture and agritourism special zoning rules. As neighbors who abut Auer Farm, we will be directly impacted by these changes, and thus we greatly appreciate your careful consideration of our concerns. We respectfully suggest the following changes to the proposed zoning regulations.

First, the **noise ordinance**.

1. For Sections 7.4.B.5(3)(a), 7.4.C.1(3) and 7.4.C.2(4), insert that music and entertainment shall be played "at a level that complies with the Town's noise ordinance" and
 - a. Delete from section 7.4.B.5(3)(a) "at a level such that those in the event area as shown on an approved site plan are able to hold a conversation without raising their voices."
 - b. Delete from section 7.4.C.1(3) "at a level where persons not located in the outdoor entertainment area can hold a conversation without raising their voices;" and
 - c. Delete from section 7.4.C.2(4) "at a level where persons located at the property line can hold a conversation without raising their voices."

There is no reason to diverge from the Town's noise ordinance. The proposed alternatives are unworkable and not measurable. With no objective standard regarding a level where people can "hold a conversation," there is no way to enforce any noise limits. Because noise to the neighbors has been and remains the primary concern with respect to this ordinance, we respectfully request that the text amendment make clear that the Town's noise ordinance must be complied with at all times, in all instances, without exception.

Second, the **sale and serving of alcohol and creation of outdoor entertainment venues with alcohol and live music until 10 p.m. daily.**

The definition of "Farm Store" (Article 2, section 2.2, "Defined Terms") and Farm Store special permit conditions (section 7.4.C) expressly permit the Bloomfield farms to become a "farm brewery," "farm distillery," or "farm winery." Although the farms will need a "special permit," there are no limitations in the proposed criteria of granting such a permit. Moreover, they may have "temporary accessory structures" of 4800 square feet for "no more than 8 months in a calendar year." This is a very serious change that should be rejected as drafted or be approved only with significant modifications.

With the passage of this zoning regulation, the local farms can (and undoubtedly will) become farm breweries, distilleries or wineries. There are plenty of local brewers, distilleries and wineries in Connecticut, and the definition and special permit criteria expressly do not require that the product be either grown or made on-site. It goes without saying, this is a major change in the use of the farm properties. The opening of a "Farm Store" means that 365 days a year, the farm(s) will be in use as a brewery, distillery or winery. While we would ask that you reject the conversion of our local farms into outdoor bars completely, the zoning requirement lacks some important safety elements.

First, there is no requirement that food must be served with the sale of the beer, wine or hard spirits consumed on premises. We will have many people consuming alcohol, without the requirement that food be served, who then will be driving away from the farm. The danger is self-evident, and is why most establishments that serve alcohol must also serve food. The criteria must require that food be served.

Second, for our neighbor Auer Farm, the farm buildings and entertainment area are extremely close to the neighbors, with no sight or sound buffer. Separate and apart from the question of how conversion to a winery, distillery or brewery will comport with its charitable, educational purpose, none of the neighbors on either side of Auer Farm purchased their properties with the expectation that they would be adjacent to an outdoor bar in operation 365 days a year until 10 p.m. at night. It will definitely lower property values and will significantly degrade the neighborhood.

To the extent we are converting from a 4-H Farm to an outdoor bar and entertainment center, there must be express and explicit limits in the zoning regulations as to how many months of the year, days of the week and hours of the day the entertainment center may be open. We would ask that it be limited to Thursday-Sunday, with Thursday & Sunday end of activities by 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday by 10 p.m. We would also ask that these activities only be permitted for four months a year.

Third, in section 7.4.C.1(3), the "Farm Store" special permit expects the winery, distillery or brewery to offer live entertainment until 10 p.m. That entertainment is not considered to be an "event," and thus under the criteria listed, live entertainment until 10 p.m. would be permitted 365 days a year. In section 7.4.C.1(4), the special permit criteria state that "events" are subject to the limitations of section 7.4.B.5 of only 15 agricultural events per calendar year, and the limitations of section 7.4.C.2 that the farm store be in a structure. However, the entertainment ancillary to the Farm Store is not an event. We would ask that any ancillary entertainment be expressly limited to 12 times in a calendar year.

Third, **the number of "events" permitted on the property.**

Next, separate and apart from the "Farm Store" activities permitted, the text amendment contemplates 15 "agricultural" events a calendar year; plus 15 non-Agricultural events; plus four multi-

day or special events; plus unlimited "indoor events." For at least 34 weekends out of 52 weekends in a year, there will be outdoor events. Indoor events presumably can be in the "temporary accessory structures," and thus will be in tents that do not dampen noise.

This is not agritourism – this is converting farmland into entertainment venues. We would ask for an overall cap of outdoor events, no matter of what type, of no more than 16 days a calendar year. We would also ask that indoor events must be in a hard structure, with four walls, a roof and doors, and not be permitted in pavilions, tents or any type of temporary structure.

Fourth, **other agritourism regulations**. In the applicant's cover letter, the agritourism zoning regulations from Simsbury, Granby and Suffield were referenced. It is clear that the application here was based on the proposed Granby regulations, but the Granby regulations do not include the provisions for a winery, brewery or distillery, and indeed, prohibits a Farm Store and a Limited Farm Store from selling alcohol. In a similar fashion, the Simsbury agritourism regulations also do not permit a winery, brewery or distillery. The Simsbury zoning regulations include the following important protection for neighbors:

Neighboring premises: The proposed use and improvements shall not adversely affect the enjoyment, usefulness and value of premises in the general neighborhood thereof. The location of outdoor events and activities shall take into consideration the current use of the surrounding properties. The Commission may require specific separating distances and/or appropriate buffer strips with plantings, fences, or walls that screen the activity from adjacent properties.

Simsbury Zoning Regulation 8.5(B)(2). Suffield has many more farms than Bloomfield, and allows horses to be kept in residential zones, but does not appear to have distinct agritourism regulations.

In **conclusion**, the neighbors to Auer Farm have learned the hard way that unless there is an express restriction and limitation, Auer Farm will not consider the impacts on its neighbors. We attempted dialogue and were rebuffed. We suggested ways to minimize the noise impact, and they did not take even the simplest of steps to create a sound barrier. The placement of the farm and its area it uses for events is in a sound echo chamber – any sounds, but particularly music, reverberates up the entire hillside. Unless handled properly, every single sound on the farm will be heard by the immediate neighbors, and any sound above the ordinance will echo throughout the neighborhood.

You can encourage agritourism without converting local farms into entertainment venues with wine, beer and hard alcohol. We ask that the provisions that permit these farms to become wineries, breweries and distilleries be disallowed, as they have not been included in our neighboring communities' agritourism zoning regulations. If those provisions remain, we ask that you impose reasonable safety conditions, and significantly limit the days and months of operations.

You can have a reasonable number of events without making it impossible for the neighbors to ever use their back yards. There is no reason the noise ordinance should not apply to all events at all times, and there is no reason why every weekend of the year must be filled with an event. Clearly similar provisions for the neighbors as set forth in the Simsbury regulation should be included in these regulations. We ask that the noise ordinance apply to all events, and that the number of events be limited.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We respectfully request permission to speak at the public hearing.

Mark & Clare Kindall
27 High Hill Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002
Phone: 860-231-1323
Email: mpkindall@gmail.com
Clare.kindall@gmail.com

Sent from Mail for Windows

Auerfarm Needs Your Help Today !

22.05.19 Auerfarm Special Meeting Zoning Proposal-

Action needed no later than 5 PM today!

Dear Auerfarm Friends,

On Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 7 PM a special meeting of Bloomfield's Planning and Zoning Commission will be held. The purpose of the meeting is to address a proposal which directly affects the future ability for Auerfarm to fulfill its mission "Inspiring children and adults to engage in, learn about, and enjoy agriculture, science, and the natural environment."

We ask that you support Auerfarm by sending an email supporting the proposed zoning amendment. **No later than 5 pm today.** Send your email to jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org.

The proposed amendment contains zoning changes that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, the ability to have a farm store – where we would sell our farm products grown by our students, expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm and host a limited number of non agricultural events.

40% of farm/nature based non profits closed their doors permanently during Covid-19. Auerfarm struggles daily to remain financially viable. The change in zoning would allow Auerfarm to diversify somewhat, enabling us to better serve our community.

If you wish to view the hearing and/or testify live during the hearing you will need to register at: https://bloomfieldct.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3-hEEaXkQFykiTBx9Kw83g

Written material and testimony may be submitted up to 24 hours before the meeting by e-mailing the Director of Planning at jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erica Fearn, CAE

Executive Director

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:16 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: proposed zoning amendment to support Auerfarm

TPZ, for your FYI see below.

Deshant, please include with the file for testimony.

Thanks!

Jen

From: Tod Kallenbach <todk@dk-advertising.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:10 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: proposed zoning amendment to support Auerfarm

As a fellow Bloomfield business owner, I am writing in support of the passage of this amendment.

Thank you.

Tod Kallenbach
Vice President
Dornenburg | Kallenbach Advertising
16 Southwood Drive
Bloomfield, CT 06002
O: 860.726.9740, x102
M: 860.899.8546
todk@dk-advertising.com
www.dk-advertising.com



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Dornenburg Kallenbach Advertising and DKA are trade names of Dornenburg Group, LLC

From: Erica Fearn, CAE <efearn@auerfarm.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:05 PM
To: Tod Kallenbach <todk@dk-advertising.com>
Subject: Auerfarm needs your help today!

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:18 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Mark Dibella - Proposed Zoning amendment

TPZ, for your FYI.
Deshant, another for the file.

From: Mark DiBella <dibella.mark@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:11 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Proposed Zoning amendment

Good afternoon Jennifer,

This email is in regards to the possible amendment to the zoning for farms in Bloomfield. As the office manager for the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm, sometimes I do not think people understand how difficult it is to keep places like this operating. Fundraisers and events help bring in the income necessary for us to keep with our mission to inspire children and adults to engage in, and enjoy agriculture, science and the natural environment. I hope the zoning commission realizes how important these events are and passes amendment. Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Enjoy the rest of your day.

Mark

**Written Testimony on TPZ May/19/2022 Special Meeting Agenda Agenda 2a
(Continued)**

Petition by Aaron J. Romano for a proposed Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism.

Submitted by Garrett Phelan
37 High Hill Road
Bloomfield CT 06002

1. Deny Petition. Regulations are already in place to protect farms and make agritourism one alternative to protect farm property in the area. As stated in the petitioner's Statement of Purpose *"The purpose of the regulation is to promote agritourism with activities and uses in Bloomfield, while preserving farms and farmlands, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of citizens. Agritourism uniquely combines aspects of tourism and agricultural industries and **provides for farms to diversify their incomes with activities and events related to agriculture.**"* (bold type mine)

The petition goes beyond the scope of *"activities and events related to agriculture."* to include many non-agricultural events and special events. Many outdoors with amplified music and entertainment. We can have and further develop agritourism within present or less general and ambiguous regulations.

There was no attempt to include consultation with all stakeholders.

The petitioner states the petition affects four farms but does not name them. No other farm was part of this petition and no farm submitted written testimony in the original TPZ meeting.

OR

2. Use the *full regulatory process* and not *the expedited regulatory process* so that the many issues and possible unintended consequences can be ironed out (see #3). Also, a closer look at how to protect and conserve Auerfarm area as part of a larger "Greenway" program.

Lion's Tale Farm and Retreat Center could continue under present regulations as other farms have, including Auerfarm. Although Lion's Tale might not have all the financial resources Auerfarm has, there are enough possible farm activities and farm related events for the farm to sponsor.

3. Include Auerfarm as a part of a "Greenway" project or other conservation, historic, and cultural treasure as outlined in various parts of POCD including connecting it to Talcott Mountain Range and the Great Drain to further preserve and protect key natural resources and habitats.

The Talcott Mountain Range and Great Drain are located along the western portion of the Town. These features are important natural resource and habitat areas that contribute to community character. The ridgeline of the Mountain was identified as a key resource to protect in the Town's 2000 POCD. In 2009 the Town Plan and Zoning Commission adopted the Talcott Mountain Overlay District (TMOD) zoning regulation. This tool, along with sensitive land ownership, is an important approach to protect this resource and it should remain in effect. The Great Drain, which runs parallel to Talcott Mountain, is home to a concentration of - identified important habitat areas ("Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern species and Significant Natural Communities," Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). The continued preservation of land in this watershed can help protect and link important wildlife habitats, along with other benefits that undeveloped land provides.

I continue to advocate that Auerfarm and the surrounding area; Auerfarm State Park, the Reservoir, Talcott Mountain and Penwood Forest could be a wonderful gem that Bloomfield in collaboration with Auerfarm as part of a "Greenway" that would be a Connecticut gem! It would be a quiet outdoor area that offers quiet outdoor activities in nature and/or farm activities, at the same time being a wildlife habitat and educational farm for use by the public. I mentioned in my previous testimony a safe walking and /or biking way could originate near Bloomfield Town Center.

It would take some collaboration and creative thinking on the part of the town and Auerfarm to bring this to reality, but it would be worth the work.

If this petition under review goes through as now stated and would be very difficult to go backwards and try to reclaim the area for this special project. A valuable and unique opportunity will be lost.

I'm not sure why Lions Roar Farm (and other farms?) were included in the original Cease and Desist Order. Auerfarm seems to be a special case it is a 501c Education charitable organization that was also created under Quit Deed Claim on file in the zoning office.

Quit Claim Deed (page 4)

It is further agreed by the grantee on behalf of itself, its successors and assigns, that the land conveyed herein shall be used solely for the promotion of programs with 4-H youth activities...

Quit Claim Deed (page 5)

" In the event that the grantee, its successors and assigns, shall be unable to use the premises conveyed herein for the furtherance of youth activities, it shall convey said land with the buildings and improvements thereon to a charitable grantee or public or government agency willing and capable of dedicating the use thereof to open space. All covenants contained herein shall be covenants running with the land and binding on the heirs, successors and assigns of the parties hereto."

Decision Consideration Questions with quick short answers by me. Many parts of various written testimonies on file already address different aspects of these questions

1. How does the amendment aid and contribute to the community?

It does not promote farm life but tends to use farms as entertainment venues that have a negative impact on nearby residences, residential property values and natural and wildlife areas.

2. How might the amendment impact the community?

The written testimony addresses many issues of how the amendment would have a negative impact on the community especially more noise nuisance, decline in nearby residential property values.

3. How many properties and local farms would benefit from this regulation?

This was not clear in the petition. In the letter to TPZ the petitioner stated impact 4 farms but does not name them and there is no testimony from them. Petitioner sites four unnamed farms. No other farms offered testimony at first hearing.

4. Does the amendment align with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)?

I believe this amendment does not align with the POCD on many levels and at a minimum a closer look at the entire section of the POCD.

POCD references with page numbers that ought to be consulted (especially in regards to protecting the Auerfarm area) with page#:

-What we want to protect-16, -Protect habitat-19,26, -Talcott Mtn connection-27
-Community Character and Historic Resource-29,30 -Greenways or managed open space 31, 36
-Tax relief-39 -Conservation and Environmental, Historic Preserve 44 -Historic and Scenic Preserve (Designate Auerfarm area as Historic Site) -Sensitive ownership 45 -Protect single Family residences 71-Open Space 111

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:51 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: FW: Supporting Auerfarm Zoning Proposal

TPZ, see below.

Deshant, please file. 😊

From: bushr23@aol.com <bushr23@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:47 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Fwd: Supporting Auerfarm Zoning Proposal

Whoops, I had the wrong email 1st time. Hope you've received this,

Carlene Bush

-----Original Message-----

From: bushr23@aol.com
To: jvalentino@bloomfield.org <jvalentino@bloomfield.org>
Sent: Wed, May 18, 2022 2:39 pm
Subject: Supporting Auerfarm Zoning Proposal

Please pass the pending zoning proposal for Auerfarm that will enable them to continue hosting some Agriculturally based events, having the ability to sell their products made by students from projects done on the farm, expanding recreational activities that tie into Farm things. Auerfarm is a place that was gifted to the Town of Bloomfield, the community to be used as a resource for people to come experience nature, learn about the environment, what people can do working from the earth. nature, animals in their environments.....

Please vote this special zoning proposal through to help Auerfarm continue to do what it needs to do to service thousands of people of all ages no matter race, religion, physical abilities or socio-economic background to come, explore, learn, benefit emotionally, physically.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carlene D Bush

W Hartford, CT

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:53 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: FW: Auer Farm proposed zoning changes

See below for review and for the record testimony.

Sorry for so many emails. I want to be sure you get them. We can discuss a plan moving forward for such large amounts of testimony.

From: David ViVenzio <dave@vivenzioinsurance.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:46 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Cc: 'Erica Fearn, CAE' <efearn@auerfarm.org>
Subject: Auer Farm proposed zoning changes

As a past donor to many events at Auer farm, I saw how important these fund raisers are for supporting their ongoing ventures with children for all different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. If the zoning changes it could affect valuable resources for Auer Farm to operate and may force a valuable historical institution of our beloved State.

Please do not pass through any zoning that may affect Auer Farms important nonagricultural events.

Thank you for attention and time.

Best Regards...

Dave ViVenzio

ViVenzio & Associates Insurance Inc.
193 Talcottville Rd.
Vernon, CT. 06066
860-871-2030 Work
860-872-3699 Fax
860-798-8920 Cell

Please keep us in mind, should you have any family or friends that are in need of any Personal Auto/Home, Life, Health or Commercial insurance. We would be happy to provide them with the same superior service –

“The way to go is ViVenzio” !!!

THIS EMAIL AND ANY FILES TRANSMITTED WITH IT ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND ARE INTENDED SOLEY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL OR ENTITY TO WHOM THEY ARE ADDRESSED. If you are not the intended recipient or the person responsible for delivering the email to the intended recipient, be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing, or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. Any inadvertent receipt by you of confidential information shall not constitute a waiver of confidentiality. The sender disclaims liability for error or omissions in the content of this message that arise as a result of email transmission. If you have received this email in error, please return immediately to the sender and delete this copy from your system. Thank you for your cooperation.

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:54 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Brenda Watson Agritourism in Bloomfield - Protect Farns

TPZ for your review
Deshant, for the file. THX!

From: Brenda Watson <Brendam_Watson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:42 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Cc: Danielle Wong <dwong@bloomfieldct.org>; Rickford.kirton@gmail.com; Suzette Brown <suzette.dbrown@yahoo.com>; Gregorycdavis@att.net
Subject: Agritourism in Bloomfield - Protect Farns

Please protect and support our youth, our economic development, and our towns farming heritage by NOT allowing the plague of NIMBY'ism rule. NIMBY'ism, is rooted in the promise of privilege for some and not others. It gets in the way of progress, affordable housing and equity in education. Auerfarm, was and is a safe space for youth and families. As you know, we do not have a downtown. We have medical offices, car parts retail and take out restaurants. We do not have entertainment, we're barely a destination. If NIMBY'ism wins, Bloomfield loses.

Brenda Watson
13 Warbler Circle
860.888.4478

Deshant Russell

From:
Sent:
To:

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:55 PM
Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmfldedms65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ;
Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce
Pickett (jtcaidwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain;
michaেলivierlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
David Kopp - Agritourism Amendment

Subject:

Oh my, more testimony. They're coming in by the minute. See below.
Deshant, please file.

From: Dave Kopp <davekopp@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:51 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentin@bloomfieldct.org>
Cc: Erica Fearn <efearn@auerfarm.org>; Philip Schenck <pschenck673@yahoo.com>; Dave Kopp
<davekopp@comcast.net>; Vikki Reski <vikki.reski@comcast.net>
Subject: Agritourism Amendment

May 18, 2022

To: Town Planning and Zoning Commission, Town of Bloomfield
From: David Kopp and Philip Schenck

Re: Proposed Agritourism Zoning Regulation Text Amendment

We are writing to you regarding the proposed agritourism text amendment to the zoning regulations of the Town of Bloomfield. We both are residents of the Balbrae Condominium Association, which is located immediately adjacent to Auerfarm. As it happens, we both also are members of the Board of Directors of Auerfarm, and we support the proposed amendment submitted by Aaron Romano. The proposed amendment will enable Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, expand outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm, and host a limited number of non-agricultural events. In this way, the amendment would help Auerfarm to remain financially viable, to fulfill its mission of inspiring children and adults to engage in, learn about, and enjoy agriculture, science, and the natural environment.

Neighboring towns of Simsbury, Granby, Suffield and others have passed regulations to expand activities on farms. These regulations help farms to stay viable and maintain land as open space. We respectfully request that Bloomfield adopt the proposed text amendment, to help Auerfarm and other farms in Bloomfield to remain open and serve the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Kopp
164 Balbrae Drive
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Philip Schenck
16 Wyndcliffe Park
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:55 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Davina Fogel - AuerFarms

See below for the record.
Deshant, please include in the file.

From: davina fogel <davinaforpta@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:54 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: AuerFarms

I would like to add my support for the zoning proposal that will affect agricultural entities in Bloomfield. I lived for many years in a densely populated area of the US and cannot emphasize enough how much of a loss it would be for our area to lose these open spaces where we can feel a closer connection to our land and to the community around us. Farms are more than just agricultural produce – they are a teaching, learning, community building resource which allows our children (and even us adults) to feel the deep connection to the earth and the interconnected nature of farming and our modern lives. The fact that our local farms open their doors to the community to allow us to share this gift with our children is simply priceless. Having lived in a concrete jungle for over a decade, I can attest to how easily we can disconnect from nature and the importance of safeguarding it.

It is a flat fact that local farms can rarely match the cost of produce that large scale farming provides and the cost of locally grown produce has been a bit of a shock. However, I grit my teeth and pay for it since I am supporting the existence of the farms as well as the quality of the produce. If these farms are now exploring avenues where they can add participatory opportunities for the community to help defray their costs, I hope the zoning commission will consider their proposal.

If there is any way to encourage community involvement and at the same time assist in the viability of these farms, I sincerely hope the zoning commission with support it.

Sometimes we don't know what we have until it is too late.

Sincerely,
Davina Fogel

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:57 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Dennis Hubbs - Zoning amendment
Importance: High

For your review.
Deshant, for the file. 😊

From: Dennis Hubbs <dennis@ddtvl.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:55 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Zoning amendment
Importance: High

Hi. Donna and I want to go on record as *fully supporting* the proposed amendment in zoning for Auerfarm as requested by the farm. Auerfarm is an important asset to Bloomfield and MUST be supported!

Thank you,

Dennis Hubbs
Donna Hubbs

=====
Dennis A. Hubbs, CTC/MCC
D & D Travel Services, LLC
16 Brooke Street
Bloomfield, CT 06002
www.ddtvl.com
email: dennis@ddtvl.com
(860) 243-9458
(800) 613-0282
Fax: (860) 243-0494

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To: Town Planning and Zoning Commission, Town of Bloomfield

From: Seth Klein, 35 High Hill Road, Bloomfield CT

Re: May 19 Special Session: Testimony on proposed Agritourism Text Amendment

I write to follow up on the testimony that I and my wife submitted in connection with the April 28, 2022, meeting of this Commission. I reiterate all of the points raised in that previous submission and continue to have the very substantial concerns raised in that letter (including, for example, the complete lack of regulation on non-agricultural events under 200 persons, the vague noise standards, and the expansive alcohol allowances).

Since my prior submission and following the April 28 meeting, however, I have had the opportunity to meet with applicant Aaron Romano as well as Director Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez and Town Attorney Marc Needelman about the above and other issues. I hope to continue to work with Mr. Romano and the Town Planning and Zoning Department to address some of my and my neighbors' concerns, and to see what compromises and proposals all interested parties may be able to jointly submit to the Commission in the future.¹ I believe that my discussions with Mr. Romano and the Town to date have been productive and in good faith, and I hope to continue that positive relationship moving forward.

Although these discussions are promising, they are also just beginning. I firmly believe that this is an important process that requires significant attention to detail and should not be rushed. Many parties throughout Bloomfield will be affected by any agritourism regulations that this Commission eventually adopts, and many stakeholders, including those who may not yet even be at the table, will be substantially affected. I respectfully submit that there is a good reason why major text amendments typically go through a rigorous drafting and vetting process rather than being summarily decided.

Accordingly, I urge this Commission to hold off on acting on the proposed regulations at the May 19 meeting, and allow the affected parties and the Department further opportunity to confer in good faith to attempt to address all parties' concerns.

Sincerely,

Seth R. Klein
35 High Hill Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002
srk314@comcast.net

¹ Although I am coordinating with my neighbors to try to raise our concerns as efficiently as possible, I do not represent any of them (or any other potentially affected Bloomfield resident) in any formal capacity, and am merely serving as one conduit of information and discussion.

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:59 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Ruthanne Marchetti - support of 22.05.19 Auerfarm Zoning Proposal

TPZ for your FYI
Deshant, for the file.

From: Ruthanne Marchetti <ruthanne.marchetti@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:56 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: support of 22.05.19 Auerfarm Zoning Proposal

Dear Ms. Valentino-Rodriguez,

I write to support the amendment that contains zoning changes that would allow for Bloomfield to expand agrotourism.

I have read Aaron Romano's request for a zoning change that would allow for some agrotourism in Bloomfield. And I am in full support of the idea.

https://www.bloomfieldct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf7551/f/pages/proposed_agritourism_amendment_written_testimonies_1.pdf

Bloomfield is a beautiful town with agricultural roots. Sadly, we have already lost too many beautiful farms. I believe anything the town can do to support the culture and feel of our town's remaining farmers and its farming history will be good for the town.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ruthanne Marchetti
Vice President Wintonbury Historical Society
669 Bloomfield Ave.
Bloomfield, CT

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:59 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Jeanne Roberts - 22.05.19 Auerfarm Special Meeting Zoning Proposal

For your review and for filing with our testimony

From: Jeanne Roberts <JRoberts@mrglaw.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:57 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: 22.05.19 Auerfarm Special Meeting Zoning Proposal

I am emailing **in favor** of the zoning proposal.

Jeanne S. Roberts

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:03 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: James Thompson - Support for Auerfarm Zoning Amendment

For your review and for the record.

-----Original Message-----

From: James Thompson <jthompson@blmfld.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:33 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Cc: eearn@auerfarm.org; Donald F. Harris Jr. <dharris@blmfld.org>
Subject: Support for Auerfarm Zoning Amendment

Dear Ms. Valentino-Rodriguez,

Please accept this email as Bloomfield Public School's support for the amendments to Planning and Zoning codes as requested by Auerfarm.

Auerfarm has been a long-standing community partner with Bloomfield Public Schools. They have provided extensive STEM related educational activities for our students from Preschool through grade twelve. Their facilities have served generations of Bloomfield students through multiple school to farm programs. They have demonstrated their commitment to the families and children of Bloomfield through programming that includes:

- * After School activities,
- * Summer program activities,
- * Family focused events,
- * Career development workshops for high school students, and
- * year-round STEM education for students attending Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School.

Their proposed amendments will allow expansion of programmatic offerings to our students and the greater community.

My hope is that you and the Planning and Zoning Board see the tremendous asset Auerfarm is to our town, and in particular, the enrichment of learning opportunities they provide to our children. Please pass the requested amendments so that Auerfarm can expand program offerings and ensure that future Bloomfield students will have access to the best possible learning environment well into the future.

Regards,

Dr. James Thompson, Jr.
Superintendent

The information in this email is confidential. The contents may not be disclosed or used by anyone other than the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete the message and notify the sender immediately.

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:04 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Lucas Karmazinas - Support for Zoning Amendment to Allow Expansion of Farm Activities to Include Agritourism

For the record and review.

From: Lucas Karmazinas <lucas.karmazinas@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:27 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Support for Zoning Amendment to Allow Expansion of Farm Activities to Include Agritourism

Hello Ms. Valentino-Rodriguez,

I am writing to encourage the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town of Bloomfield to accept the proposed zoning amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism. As so many of CT's agricultural spaces and uses vanish, with this change Bloomfield has a chance to support its remaining farms and allow them to adapt and survive into the future. This will benefit not only the farmers and users of these spaces, but the community and environment at large.

Many thanks,

Lucas A. Karmazinas

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:05 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Mike Rohrbach - Amendment

For your review and for the file.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Rohrbach <robey77@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:25 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Amendment

I support the amendment for the farm

Sent from my iPhone

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:06 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Tamara Hochman - Support Auerfarm

For your review and the file.

Best,
Jen

From: Tamara Hochman <tamara.hochman@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:22 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Support Auerfarm

To the Bloomfield Director of Planning Valentino,
I am writing to voice my support for the zoning change that will enable Auerfarm to diversify. The farm is a wonderful asset to our town and I support it wholeheartedly.

Thank you,
Tamara Hochman

--

Sent from Gmail Mobile

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:07 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Judith Nelson - Auer Farm

For your review and the file.

Jen

From: judy3393@aim.com <judy3393@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 2:21 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Auer Farm

As someone who has enjoyed programs and farm experiences over the years at Auer Farm, I hope you will vote for zoning adjustments that will expand the Auer Farm's community contributions in the future.

Thank you
Judith Nelson

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:17 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Roberta Olivera - Supporting the zoning amendment

See below for the record.
Deshant, please file. Thank you.

-----Original Message-----

From: Birdie Olivera <birdie.olivera@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:04 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Supporting the zoning amendment

Roberta Olivera supports the zoning amendment

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:17 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Clark - Zoning amendment

See below.
Deshant, please include.

From: Patricia Clark <jardinage45@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:04 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Zoning amendment

We support the amendment that allows Auerfarm expanded use
Pat and Neil Clark
230 duncaster rd
Bloomfield

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:18 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: FW: May 19th Testimony
Attachments: TPZ May 19th, 2022-3.pdf

For review below and attached.
Deshant please include.

From: Jennie Kelly <cohen.jennie@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:04 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: May 19th Testimony

May 19th, 2022

Testimony for TPZ Special Meeting

Dear Ms. Valentino-Rodriguez and the TPZ,

I'm writing to add to my testimony submitted April 29th. Auer Farm recently sent out a letter saying that the zoning amendments will allow Auerfarm to pursue their mission of educating children. However, as the ZBA agreed during the June 28th, 2022 meeting, Auerfram was acting well beyond their mission of education in the types and frequency of events being held (including many loud DJ events with open bars).

The farm stated the zoning changes will allow Auerfarm to hold "a limited number of agricultural events," and I'd like to counter that they already hold a number of agricultural events, including several per month for children, and more seasonal ones such as Party in Plaid, Blueberry Jam, and the fall festival. I question the implication that they need a change in zoning law to hold these events.

In addition, they said the zoning changes will allow the farm to "have a farm store." They already do have a store that sells eggs, honey, and seedlings. In terms of the amendment allowing the farm to "expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm," their original use application allows for all these events that are compatible with the farm.

In terms of non-agricultural events, Auer Farm has not taken into consideration their principal use as an educational farm. They built a stage directly adjacent to my yard where they were about to hold over 50 performances with amplified sounds over the course of a month. They have held DJ events with unlimited alcohol that have rattled the windows in my house and woken up my son.

The Executive Director Erica Fern cited COVID as a reason farms have closed, yet their summer camps and children's activities have quickly sold out. Ms. Fern also received a PPP loan in the amount of \$26,445 last March, so I imagine was able to secure relief for the farm during the time that COVID may have affected their revenue.

Auer farm is packed daily with children from all over Hartford county, and is surrounded by neighbors and community – including me – who are more than willing to support them in their mission. What we are not willing to do is fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood by hosting events that are incompatible with their mission and their zone.

May 19th, 2022

Testimony for TPZ Special Meeting

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Auer farm is packed daily with children from all over Hartford county, and is surrounded by neighbors and community – including me – who are more than willing to support them in their mission. What we are not willing to do is fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood by hosting events that are incompatible with their mission and their zone.

Sincerely,

Jennie Kelly

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:19 PM
To: Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmfddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) ; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); Kevin Hussain; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: Julio - Auerfarm Support

For the record and for filing.

Best,
Jen

From: Julio Carrasquillo III <jcarrasquilloiii@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:06 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Auerfarm Support

Good Afternoon,

This email is regarding the zoning changes for Auerfarm in Bloomfield. Please know that my family supports the changes to the zoning being proposed which would allow my daughters, Bloomfield residents and students to learn on the farm and further their ability to help others.

Thank you,

Julio Carrasquillo III
32 Foothills Way, Bloomfield, CT 06002

Deshant Russell

From: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:27 PM
To: Kevin Hussain; Deshant Russell; Barry Berson; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2); Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com); Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com); Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com); michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette
Subject: RE: Julio - Auerfarm Support

Greetings,

These will be consolidated, and several minutes ago (as the testimony continued to roll in) I've been saving to PDF and putting in a folder rather than forwarding to your emails. We will scan them in up until the meeting tomorrow and will capture as many as possible to one folder or scanned document.

Best,
Jen

From: Kevin Hussain <civil_kevin@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:25 PM
To: Deshant Russell <drussell@bloomfieldct.org>; Barry Berson <civbear1@aol.com>; blmflddems65@yahoo.com; Byron Lester (2) <blester02@comcast.net>; Byron.Lester@ct.gov; Daniel Mara <dmara@sandlermara.com>; Dwight H. Bolton Sr. (dwight@dh-bolton.com) <dwight@dh-bolton.com>; Joyce Pickett (jtcaldwell118@gmail.com) <jtcaldwell118@gmail.com>; Katie Blint (kblint@travelers.com) <kblint@travelers.com>; michaeloliverlocal43@yahoo.com; Stephen Millette <smill357@yahoo.com>; Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Re: Julio - Auerfarm Support

Jennifer,

Thanks for all the updates but it's best to have these as one document daily/weekly or before the meeting (maybe print to pdf and combine). Emails can easily be misplaced or simply missed.

Regards,
Kevin Hussain

On Wednesday, May 18, 2022, 03:19:03 PM EDT, Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org> wrote:

For the record and for filing.

Best,

Jen

From: Julio Carrasquillo III <jcarrasquilloiii@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:06 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez <jvalentino@bloomfieldct.org>
Subject: Auerfarm Support

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Adam Silver <adam.c.silver3@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:19 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm Zoning

Hello,

I am writing to support the proposed zoning amendment that will affect Auerfarm. Auerfarm has had an enormous impact on my daughter. Over the past 3 years she has been involved in 4-H, taken summer camps, and volunteers there weekly. These activities have helped her confidence, provided leadership opportunities, and have "given her a purpose." After visiting or working on the farm, her mental health is always significantly improved. I am certain this is true for numerous children in the community.

Sincerely,

Adam Silver

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Amanda Lennon <amilligan1989@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:11 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Proposed zoning amendment

To Whom It May Concern,

We support the proposed zoning amendment that would allow Auer Farm to expand its activities and farm. Auer Farm is an amazing place for families and one of our favorite places to visit in the state. We would love for them to have a shop and more classes.

The Lennon Family

Sent from my iPhone

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Chip Caton <chipcaton@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:15 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Agricultural Regulations/Agritourism

Dear Jennifer,

I am deeply committed to maintaining as much of the rural character of Bloomfield as possible. In order to do so we must do all that we can, within reason, to ensure that our dwindling number of farms survive. I have read Aaron Romano's proposed amendment and the thoughtful concerns raised by neighbors of his property. Clearly details need to be worked out. I do hope that you and the TP&Z will make every effort to explore the concept and find an appropriate solution.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chip Caton

59 Duncaster Rd (across the street from a farm)

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Elizabeth A. Mellow <libbie.mellow5@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:13 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm

I support the zoning changes to allow Auerfarm to expand its offerings. Although high on the hill, out of the mainstream, it is a great asset to Bloomfield and a happy memory for every child that has visited. There is precedent. We always bought our eggs there.

Libbie Mellow
400 Seabury Drive
4179
Bloomfield

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Nancy Weiss <Nancypweiss@charter.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:15 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Cc: Erica Fearn
Subject: Auerfarm

Dear Bloomfield Official - I have been involved with Auerfarm since the beginning, when it was transferred by the Schiro and Koopman families to the University of Connecticut 4-H program through the 4-H Development Fund. I am proud the work I was able to do all those years ago to make the farm an important place for youth and family programs and an important part of the community. It has always been an oasis of peace in the busy urban world and a jewel of green punctuated with the cheery presence of farm animals. Imagine the amount of clean air and healthy energy the place produces!

It has never been easy!

The farm did not come with an endowment, but did have a complicated history of rental houses, a rent in the barn to the University of Hartford for storage, various relationships with area farmers for hay and other crops, an apple orchard and later an extensive berry patch. Though all these years a combination of a few paid staff members and a remarkable number of volunteers have struggled mightily to keep the place looking good, safe for children, an asset to the community, all while staying financially afloat.

The opportunity to have a farm store, host a few agricultural events and a limited number of non-ag events will help very much. Erica Fearn is an excellent Executive director, who knows how to teach children about agriculture while also creating a place that welcomes everyone. She has a sound vision for the future of the farm.

Please help Auerfarm continue to achieve its mission. It is a very special place.

Sincerely,

Nancy P. Weiss
168 Quassett Road
Pomfret Center, CT

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Robin Hayes <sisternook@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 9:58 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm

I support the zoning amendment for Auerfarm.

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: JOHN CAPPADONA <cappadona@snet.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 9:28 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auer Farm

As residents of Bloomfield and grateful users of Auer Farm, our family and neighbors strongly support the zoning request permitting small farms in our community to sell their products at a farm store, have agricultural events, and expand outdoor farm-related recreational activities, to allow these farms, and host some non-agricultural events, to permit their continued existence as valued parts of Bloomfield.

I will be attending the virtual hearing tonight.

John Cappadona
36 Cold Spring Dr.
Bloomfield

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Megan Keough <megelliemason@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 8:37 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: In support of farm land

I have been a volunteer at farms all through CT. I find it to provide futures for generations to come. I am writing in support of zoning to provide more access to farm.

Thank you
Megan Keough

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Monica Ahern <potlamp@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 7:45 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez; Jonni Marshall
Subject: Support for Proposed Zoning Amendment

To the Bloomfield Planning and Zoning Committee:

I strongly support the proposed amendment that will allow zoning changes to Auer Farm. My daughters have both benefited greatly from Auer Farm's education programs including the science enrichment program, the summer camp, and various family events. This proposal will allow Auer Farm to thrive, despite current economic challenges and help it continue to serve Bloomfield and surrounding communities.

Sincerely,
Monica Ahern
46 Arundel Ave.
West Hartford, CT 06107

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Martha Hess <marthamhess@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 7:35 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Zoning Proposal

To whom it may concern:

Woody (Aaron) and Martha Hess strongly support the proposal which, if passed, will promote the educational and recreational endeavors of Auerfarm. We have watched this Bloomfield treasure, this living legacy of Mrs. Auerbach's vision and generosity, both struggle through a pandemic and also grow as local schools and citizens newly appreciate the need for fresh air and rural venues.

The expanded provisions in this proposal recognize the challenges of this non profit organization and its need to work hand- in -hand with the town of Bloomfield to safeguard this special place for our families and friends, particularly the youngest among us.

Sincerely,

Martha and Woody Hess

217 Duncaster Road
Bloomfield, Ct 06002

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Wes Hartford <weshartford@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 6:59 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Testimony for 05/19/22 TPZ
Attachments: AGRITOURISM TPZ 05-19-2022.pages

I wish to submit the following testimony regarding the proposed amendment to zoning regulations to allow for agritourism as submitted by Aaron Romano on behalf of Lion's Tale Farm. In general I support the farms of Bloomfield in these endeavors and would like to see them grow and prosper. At the same time I recognize the need for balance and regulation of these activities such that any Bloomfield farm wishing to engage in agritourism remains a good neighbor to the surrounding community.

My home borders on one of the farms that stands to benefit from the proposed changes. In the recent past the farm has engaged in activities that closely resemble those described in Mr. Romano's proposal, such as concerts or renting the property for various gatherings. These activities were found to be disruptive to my neighbors such that it was difficult for them to enjoy the general use of their own property, mainly due to volumes of noise that exceeded town ordinances and that occurred at levels that caused items in their homes to shake. When neighbors reached out to the farm to express their concerns it did not appear that the farm sufficiently addressed their concerns in terms of taking steps to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem.

In considering Mr. Romano's proposed amendment I have to ask that the Town Plan and Zoning Commission strictly regulate the proposed activities to ensure that the type of disruption that has already occurred can not happen again. Many of the towns that Mr. Romano has referenced in his proposal have taken similar steps, and I would ask that the TPZ review some of these regulations and apply them to agritourism in the town of Bloomfield, and to specifically tailor these regulations to fit our town as needed. Within these regulations I believe it is fair to ask that the farms adhere to existing noise ordinances or to at least set a specific decibel level that can not be exceeded. Other towns have also set regulations to prevent agritourism activities from occurring within a specific number of feet from neighboring properties, and that sound and stage equipment should be directed away from neighboring properties, both which I agree with. I also believe that the TPZ needs to consider potential traffic issues caused by agritourism related events and how those issues can be mitigated.

In conclusion, I support the proposal provided that time is taken to consider potential disruptions to the community, and that very clear regulations are put in place to prevent disruption to neighboring properties such that the surrounding community can continue to enjoy their own property.

Sincerely,

Leonard Cohen
40 High Hill Rd

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Carol Jugenheimer <juggycj@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 1:26 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Proposed Amendment, Special Meeting May 19, 2022

I heartily support the proposed amendment that contains zoning changes that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, the ability to have a farm store, expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm and host a limited number of non agricultural events.

Sincerely,

Carol Jugenheimer
Executive Board, Simsbury Garden Club

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: ROSALYN BUCHBINDER <rsbooky@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 9:17 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Town of Bloomfield "Agritourism" Zoning Proposal

I live on High Wood Rd in Bloomfield and although I'm not adjacent to Auer Farm the sound carries. As a senior citizen, my peace and solitude have been affected by the evening and weekend loud events at Auer Farm. Please take whatever time is necessary to carefully consider what will and will not be permitted.

Thank you,
Rosalyn Buchbinder
6 High Wood Rd

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Linda Goodman <linda.goodman@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 6:24 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Testimony for May 19 special hearing
Attachments: Testimony2Agritourism proposal.docx

Please find the attached for TPZ members attention.

Linda Goodman
39 High Hill Rd.
Bloomfield

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Lynette Grande <lynettegrande@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 5:50 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: In Support of the Proposed Zoning Amendment

Dear Bloomfield Planning and Zoning Commission ~

My "neighbor Auerfarm" is a Bloomfield treasure and testament to our Town's agricultural roots.

Requested zoning changes must be supported to allow Auerfarm's vision to grow and purposes for this parcel of land to evolve.

Living in the neighborhood which would be most impacted by traffic in and out of Auerfarm is of little consequence, if scheduling of events consider both am and pm rush hour traffic patterns on Simsbury Rd. and its feeder roads (Mountain Rd., Burr Rd., Loeffler Rd.)

I wholeheartedly support Auerfarm's stewardship and mission to pass on agricultural history and tradition to those of us privileged to enjoy this parcel's natural beauty.

Thank you to the Auerbach Family for their foresight and generosity.

Respectfully,
Lynette Taylor Grande
18 Cliffmount Dr.

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: MARCY BOYD <marcyboyd@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 5:50 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm

Please do not restrict what Auerfarm does. It is a special place that offers events unlike others available in the area.

Thanks, Marcy Boyd

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: David Ewart, Jr. <dewart@auerfarm.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 10:43 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Attention Bloomfield's Planning and Zoning Commission - support letter for proposed zoning amendment
Attachments: Auerfarm Letter of Support - Bloomfield's Planning and Zoning Commission 5-8-2022.pdf

Letter of Support

Please see attached - thank you.

+++++

David Ewart, Jr.
Director of Education, Program & Administration.
4-H Education Center at Auerfarm

May 18, 2022

Attention Bloomfield's Planning and Zoning Commission

Greetings Esteemed Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my support of a proposed zoning amendment which directly affects the future ability for Auerfarm to fulfill its mission "Inspiring children and adults to engage in, learn about, and enjoy agriculture, science, and the natural environment."

Since the 1950's Auerfarm has been a "gem" of Bloomfield and has been a powerful fabric of the community. Now nearing 50 years as the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm. Joining this 4-H collaboration, 100 years old, 4-H National has become the nation's largest youth development organization. The 4-H idea is simple: help young people and their families gain the skills needed to be proactive forces in their communities and develop ideas for a more innovative economy.

Auerfarm embodies all that and more. Its mission is simple and relevant – Auerfarm is committed to engaging all ages in learning about farming, science, and the environment.

The Auerfarm education program builds community and culture, raises expectations and standards, increases connection between students, and develops positive associations around school and the outdoors. But it extends far beyond our children. What starts with Children > Engages Civics > Connects our Community > Builds Economics. It's a healthy cycle replicated throughout the Nation, around the globe and for generations to come.

Extensive research on the benefits of outdoor education is synthesized below. Links to specific research papers and summaries are provided at the bottom. School performance increases when children learn outdoors. Auerfarm is our area's answer.

Please approve the proposed zoning amendment which directly affects the future ability for Auerfarm to fulfill its mission "Inspiring children and adults to engage in, learn about, and enjoy agriculture, science, and the natural environment."

With Gratitude,

David

David Ewart, Jr.
Director of Education, Program & Administration.
4-H Education Center at Auerfarm
dewart@auerfarm.org

A number of studies have documented increased school performance through outdoor education. Research has documented increased standardized test scores, enhanced attitude about school, improved in-school behavior, improved attendance and overall enhanced student achievement when students learn in and about nature. In addition, outdoor education effectively employs a greater range of children's intelligences. Many researchers contribute the increase in performance to increased relevance and hands-on experience of learning outdoors. Learning outdoors is healthy.

See the following

Nationwide Insurance

Nationwide and 4-H for Agricultural Education

Farm & agribusiness resources

Nationwide and National 4-H Council team up in ag education

Not many organizations can say they have more than 25 million alumni in the U.S.

That number doesn't come close to measuring the massive influence of 4-H. It has a strong national commitment to education, community improvement and agriculture. And Nationwide is proud to support the organization that is so important to so many.

This emphasis on education and support of agriculture is central to the Nationwide ethic. It makes our support of the organization a natural fit.

4-H offers youth programs in areas like STEM, agriculture and civic engagement. Activities provide members career-focused experience with diversity and inclusion, leadership and public speaking. They're important skills in today's modern agricultural workforce.

Young people who participate in 4-H are three times more likely to pursue a four-year college degree. Girls alone are 10 times more likely to pursue careers in a STEM-related field.

“We know that today’s youth will play a vital and necessary role in future ag innovation by applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills to solve real-world ag challenges,” said Jennifer Sirangelo, President and CEO of National 4-H Council.

“4-H is honored to partner with industry leader, Nationwide, to continue to spark youth passion for agriculture and to welcome and encourage all youth to be engaged, involved and have a seat at the table for the issues that impact their daily lives,” she added.

National 4-H Council engages youth in agriculture

See why Nationwide sponsors the National 4-H Youth Summit on Agri-Science and the impact of the Nationwide and National 4-H Council partnership.

Why agricultural education is important

Today, technology is influencing and shaping just about every sector of agriculture. That stretches from crop and livestock production to large agribusiness management and scientific research.

This evolution will enable agriculture to continue to meet the world’s growing food and fiber demand. But fewer people are choosing agriculture careers. Recent data show there is a deficit of around 40,000 jobs in the industry.

Preparing youth for careers in agriculture

To overcome this challenge, 4-H is committed to helping expose young people to career opportunities in today’s high-tech agriculture.

But 4-H is about more than promoting agriculture to young people. Participation also instills the passion to pursue those careers.

“At Nationwide, we recognize the skills learned by young people in 4-H can be applied across all aspects of their personal and professional lives,” said Mark Berven, President and COO of Nationwide Property and Casualty.

“Regardless of the industry someone chooses for a career, 4-H provides the foundation for a successful future. And you never know where it will take you. Nationwide’s current CEO Kirt Walker is a proud 4-H alumnus,” Berven added.

4-H provides real-world experience

Participation in 4-H helps members develop career skills. Those skills are also important to their communities. 4-H programs foster diversity of thought and inclusion. They’re both critical skills in today’s ag workforce.

Moving forward, 4-H will continue to offer real-world, practical education and experience to members. Programs like the 4-H National Youth Summit Series will prepare them for agricultural careers. And Nationwide will continue to support the organization that’s been so formative to millions.

“Nationwide is a company founded by agricultural leaders. Our steadfast support for National 4-H Council is something we’re very proud of. That’s especially true as we explore new ways to encourage diversity in agriculture,” Berven said.

"We all need to eat. I feel it is our responsibility to help develop new pathways for young people to get involved in agriculture. That may be directly or indirectly. 4-H is a pipeline for future talent. Nationwide will continue doing our part to help assure American agriculture is led by our very best and brightest," Berven added.

Citation: <https://www.nationwide.com/lc/resources/farm-and-agribusiness/articles/4h-ag-education>

Nationwide Insurance

Nationwide and 4-H for Agricultural Education

David Ewart Jr
Director of Education, Programs, and Administration 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm Inc.
dewart@auerfarm.org
158 Auer Farm Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002
auerfarm.org

David Ewart, Jr.

Director of Education, Program & Administration.

4-H Education Center at Auerfarm

dewart@auerfarm.org

May 18, 2022

Attention Bloomfield's Planning and Zoning Commission

Greetings Esteemed Commissioners,

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With Gratitude,

David

David Ewart, Jr.

Director of Education, Program & Administration.

4-H Education Center at Auerfarm

dewart@auerfarm.org

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But 4-H is about more than promoting agriculture to young people. Participation also instills the passion to pursue those careers.

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“We all need to eat. I feel it is our responsibility to help develop new pathways for young people to get involved in agriculture. That may be directly or indirectly. 4-H is a pipeline for future talent. Nationwide will continue doing our part to help assure American agriculture is led by our very best and brightest,” Berven added.

Citation:

<https://www.nationwide.com/lc/resources/farm-and-agribusiness/articles/4h-ag-education>

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Diana Hughes <dphughes@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:53 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Zoning Amendment

Please support the zoning amendment for Auer Farm. It's so important that the farm can continue. It serves our community as well as the greater Hartford area.

Please approve.

Thank you.

Diana Hughes

Bloomfield resident

Sent from my iPhone

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Ben Arunski <thegenre@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:48 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Zoning amendment support

Good afternoon, M Valentino!

I am a resident of West Hartford, writing to voice my support of the proposed zoning amendment, which would allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, expand outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm, hold a limited number of non-agricultural events, and open a farm store.

Auerfarm is a rare gem and holds true to its mission at all times, drawing income and participation from a wide area. The proposed zoning changes would help to secure Auerfarm's place for years to come, at a time when many nonprofit agricultural centers have struggled or closed. These changes are not just needed in the short term, though. This will grow Auerfarm into a better place for its lifetime.

Many thanks for lending your ear,
Benjamin Arunski
34 Thomson Rd, West Hartford, CT 06107
402-403-7922 (mobile)

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- - -

34 Thomson Rd
West Hartford, CT 06107

+1 402 403 7922

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Robin Sherwood <robinadair@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:44 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Re: Auerfarm Zoning Amendment

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing to let you know that as a Bloomfield resident, I am in strongly in support of the zoning amendment that would allow Auerfarm to continue to fulfill it's mission "Inspiring children and adults to engage in, learn about, and enjoy agriculture, science, and the natural environment."

I am also very much in favor of the amendment as it would allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, have a farm store and expand the outdoor rec activities compatible with the form in addition to some non agricultural events.

Auerfarm is a hidden Bloomfield gem that needs as much support as it can get to thrive and perhaps become less "hidden" and a more visible part of our community.

Sincerely,
Robin Sherwood

Robin Adair Sherwood
robinadair@icloud.com
860-830-0755

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Henriette Herzfeld <henrietteh@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:36 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez; CAE Erica Fearn
Subject: Proposed amendment,

I support the proposed amendment which contains zoning changes that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, the ability to have a farm store. They would be able to sell farm products grown by their students, expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm and host a limited number of non agricultural events. I believe these changes would greatly enhance Auerfarm and the community at large.

Henriette Herzfeld
4 East Lane Apt F
Bloomfield

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Tobie Katz <tobiekatz@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:35 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auuerfarm

I definitely support anything that will help to keep Auuerfarm a viable part of the Bloomfield community.
Tobie Katz

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: john gaynor <jmgteched@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 12:51 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auer Farm

Please support the proposed zoning amendment.

John Gaynor
68 Adams Rd.
Sent from my iPhone

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Bonnie Gaynor <bonniegaynor@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 12:48 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm

We are in support of the zoning amendment in re: Auerfarm,

Sincerely,
Bonnie Gaynor
68 Adams Rd
Bloomfield

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: George Kearns <geokearns@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 11:31 AM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm Zoning change

To whom it may concern,

I am a neighbor of AuerFarm, and am effected by the noise generated and the possible increase in traffic at events scheduled there. Please consider carefully what will be permitted there.

Best,

George Kearns
16 High Hill
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Jessica Bergen <bergen.jessica.l@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:28 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: In Support of Auerfarm

Hello,

I am writing to support the proposed amendment which contains zoning changes that will positively impact Auerfarm. We have been visiting the farm with our family since our oldest was young enough to walk and explore it himself. Now he attends special lessons with Wintonbury school and adores the farm and all it has to offer even more. Our youngest will be walking soon and we want to be able to share the farm with him for years to come.

We love Auerfarm and as Bloomfield residents are in direct support of the amendment. Anything g that will help the farm thrive is wonderful for our beautiful community. Thank you and have a great evening.

Warm Regards,
Jessica Bergen, M.S. and Family

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Tatiana Ponder <tponder@auerfarm.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:25 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Letter to support Auerfarm
Attachments: Letter of support.pdf

Please find attached. Thank you!!

--

nurtured by nature+connected to nature=healthy well-being

Tatiana Ponder

Educator

4-H Education Center at Auerfarm

tponder@[auerfarm.org](mailto:tponder@auerfarm.org)

(860) 310-7180

158 Auer Farm Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002

www.auerfarm.org



Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Adlyn Loewenthal <adlynj24@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:46 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm

I am writing to support the proposed zoning change affecting Auerfarm, allowing them to diversify their activities to address issues of their sustainability.

Auerfarm is such a treasure! Every time I drive up there I can't believe I am in a suburban community and not far out in the country. They provide excellent programming for children and it is my granddaughter's favorite place to visit - hands down.

I ask you to support this measure which would increase their income and allow them to stay viable.

Adlyn Loewenthal
137 Steele Road
West Hartford, CT 06119

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Victoria Albert <vfalbert@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:24 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: zoning amendment

I support the zoning amendment that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events. .Auerfarm is vital to Bloomfield and we should do everything we can to support it

Victoria Albert
Bloomfield

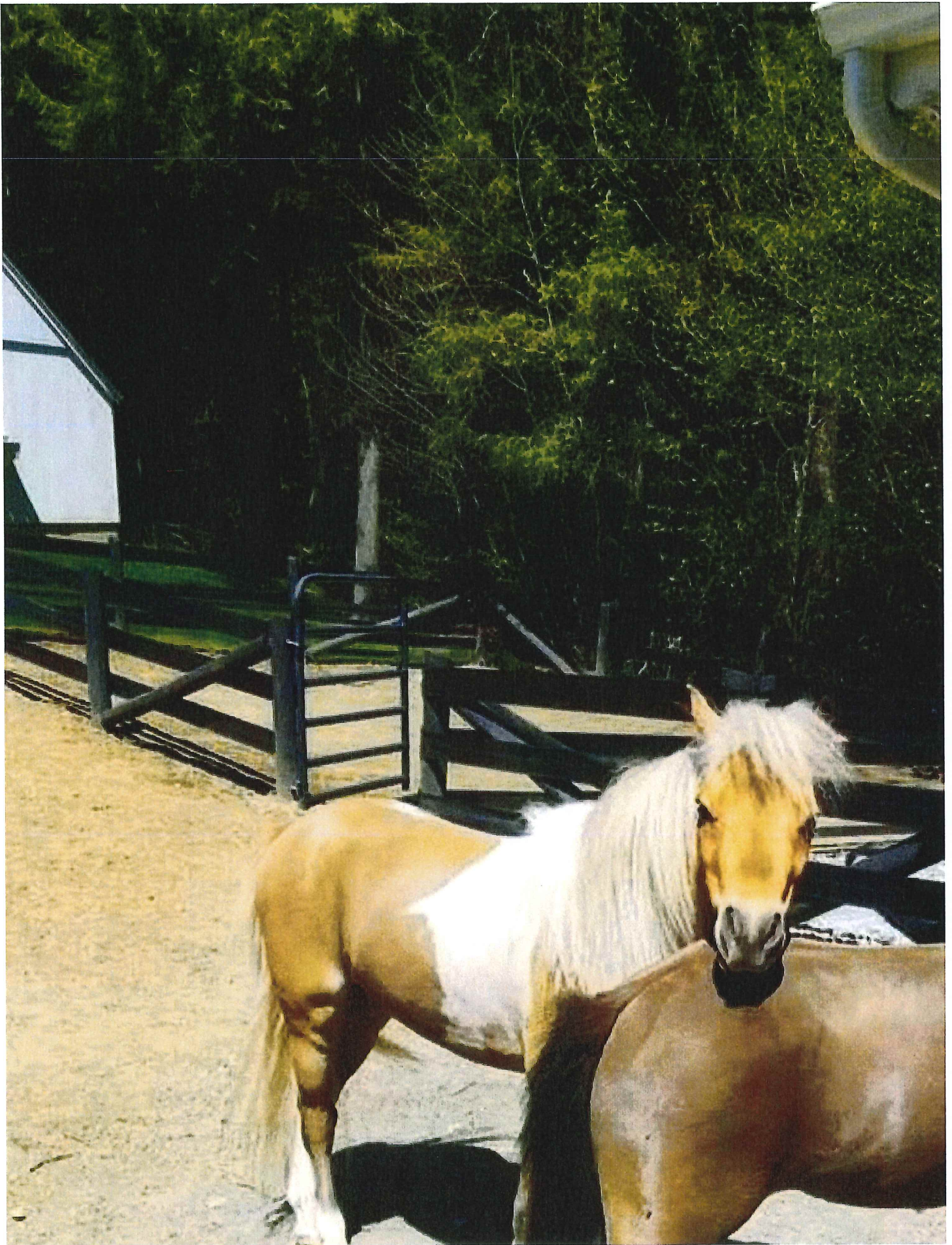
Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Phillip Bainbridge <phillipebainbridge@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:00 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

These are photos of my two boys, Cisco and Cheval. We donated them to Auerfarm to help it fulfill its mission. I urge you to support its proposal so that Auerfarm and my boys can continue the great work they are doing

Many thanks

Phil and Sally Bainbridge







Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Heather Schlott <haschlott@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:38 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm

I am in support of the zoning changes that would allow Auerfarm to diversify their activities and be more financially sustainable.

Thanks,
Heather Schlott
24 Faxon Dr, West Hartford

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Charmaine Jones <chrischarmaine2004@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:30 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auer Farms

This is a wonderful educational farm for children and adults. This farm has extended so much to the community and needs your help to keep it active. It would be a disadvantage to close any part of it considering the many resources it has to offer to the community

Sent from my iPhone

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Adam Silver <adam.c.silver3@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:19 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Auerfarm Zoning

Hello,

I am writing to support the proposed zoning amendment that will affect Auerfarm. Auerfarm has had an enormous impact on my daughter. Over the past 3 years she has been involved in 4-H, taken summer camps, and volunteers there weekly. These activities have helped her confidence, provided leadership opportunities, and have "given her a purpose." After visiting or working on the farm, her mental health is always significantly improved. I am certain this is true for numerous children in the community.

Sincerely,

Adam Silver

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Michaela Johnson <michaela_johnson@mac.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:46 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: In support of the Auerfarm zoning proposal

Good afternoon,

I am writing in support of Auerfarm's requested ability to hold a limited number of agricultural events and operate a farm store on the premises.

Auerfarm is an invaluable asset and resource for children and adults alike. When the world shut down during the height of the pandemic, Auerfarm provided much-needed access to the outdoors, a sense of community, and an escape from the challenges of pandemic life. I have seen firsthand the benefits of their events for social interactions and learning opportunities. Buying our family's Christmas tree from their pop-up tree farm last December is a memory we will always cherish. It was also a great way to put money back into our community's small businesses rather than into the pockets of big-box chain stores.

My husband and I are expecting a new baby this summer. We can't wait to introduce the baby to the magic of the farm; from visiting the animals, exploring the trails, participating in the 4-H program, and everything in-between as they grow. Auerfarm is a true and cherished gem.

Sincerely,

Michaela Johnson, M.S.Ed
West Hartford, CT

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Mary Eberle <meberle49@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:24 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Proposed changes to Bloomfield agricultural zoning regulations

Ms Valentino,

I am a Bloomfield resident and the current vice-chair of the Auerfarm Board of Directors. I am writing to strongly support the amendment submitted by Aaron Romano concerning the permitting of agri-tourism on farms in Bloomfield.

Auerfarm is a 501(c)(3) organization established pursuant to a grant of farm land and buildings by the descendants of Beatrice Fox Auerbach to the 4-H Development Fund at the University of Connecticut for the purpose of introducing youth to agriculture. Our mission is to "inspire children and adults to engage in, learn about, and enjoy agriculture, science, and the natural environment." While we are a gem of which Bloomfield can rightly be proud, we do not receive any funds from the Town of Bloomfield to carry out this mission. Rather we derive our operating budget from educational and other grants, limited farm production, educational programs for children and adults, and fund-raising. The gift of the farm property by the Auerbach family included some small cottages that used to house farm workers and their families when the Auerbachs operated the farm. We would like to use one or more of these for the purpose of agri-tourism, with limited stays by individuals or families who are interested in exploring the atmosphere and activities of the farm. This would allow us to generate funds to support the operation of the farm while at the same time furthering our mission.

We take great pride in our efforts to expose the children of Bloomfield and surrounding towns to the wonder of farm animals and the cycle of the growing seasons. We have programs that bring children from the Wintonbury preschool to the farm throughout the school year, and we have farm-to-school programs in which we visit the other Bloomfield schools to give classroom demonstrations and lessons, in cooperation with the Bloomfield Schools. We provide transition training and education for high school students with special needs from several surrounding school districts to prepare them for jobs in agriculture, landscaping and hospitality services. We have a very active and growing 4-H club at the farm which has begun to attend local and regional 4-H fairs again.

We also provide land and support for a large vegetable garden that provides several thousand pounds of pesticide-free produce to FoodShare in Bloomfield every year. Our land is open to the public 365 days a year, and I frequently encounter families and grandparents with young children walking the property and interacting with the animals. Many local residents use our property for walking, hiking, painting, and dog-walking. We do not charge an entry fee for this, as it is part of our core mission.

Grants do not pay for farm equipment or fuel for our tractors and other farm vehicles. They do not pay for maintenance and upkeep of the many buildings on the property or for maintenance of the farm road. We work very hard to raise the considerable sums necessary to continue the work of farming and to be good stewards of the Auerbach gift. During the pandemic it has been particularly difficult to raise funds. Many of our traditional fund-raising events had to be canceled or creatively adapted, with a resulting decrease in the funds raised. We continue to look for new sources of income that both support and enable our core mission. Agri-tourism is one of these.

Our vision for the farm is to reach out to an ever-expanding audience, including adults who are interested in agriculture or gardening and children who have never seen live farm animals or planted a seed and watched it grow, who do not know where maple syrup or honey come from. We also want to continue to develop the farm as a place of peace and natural beauty and open space. When I moved to Bloomfield in the mid-1970s, there were something like 17 active farms in town. Today there are only a handful. Auerfarm is the only one that is

open to the public. The hands-on experience of growing food and animals is disappearing from our landscape. We feel the Auerbachs' gift is needed now more than ever.

Agri-tourism is a natural extension of our efforts to introduce people of all ages to the wonders and rhythms of agricultural life. It is in keeping with our charge from the Auerbach family. We do not ask for much from the Town, but we ask for your support in allowing us to keep developing new ways to bring farming and open space to Bloomfield residents. The most common remark I hear from Bloomfield residents when I tell them about Auerfarm is "I never knew it was here". We are trying to change that through education and special events that bring people onto the farm to experience it.

I feel the Special Permitting provisions of the proposed regulations give the Town the ability to impose whatever restrictions it deems necessary on any particular proposed activity. We heard the complaints that were raised by our neighbors last year and worked hard to abide by the restrictions placed on us under the noise regulations of the Town. We will continue to do so, and to comply with whatever other regulations apply to our activities. We simply ask to be allowed to explore opportunities, within the laws and regulations of the Town and the State, to continue to carry out our mission for the benefit of the residents of Bloomfield and the region.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Mary Eberle
205 Duncaster Road
Bloomfield CT 06002

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Erica Fearn <efearn@auerfarm.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:07 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Public Hearing May 19 - Testimony

To: Town Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Erica Fearn, CAE, Executive Director

RE: Support the Petition by Aaron J. Romano a Zoning Regulation text amendment to allow for the expansion of farm activities to include agritourism.

The 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm is committed to providing bold and innovative programming to our community by engaging diverse learners of all ages in learning about agriculture, science, and the environment. Auerfarm programming not only directly reinforces curriculum with academic standards, but it directly integrates impactful integration of reinforcing self-discovery in purposeful play with holistic socio-emotional optimism, motivation, empathy; intelligence, altruism, responsibility, and fairness. All of Auerfarm's programming is directly connected to farming on the 120 acres of farmland that we own as a charitable organization.

Auerfarm is open 365 days a year as a place for our community to gather, walk, hike, interact with farm animals, enjoy and even volunteer in the gardens.

The proposed amendment contains zoning changes that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, the ability to have a farm store – managed by and where we would sell our farm products grown by our students, expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm and host a limited number of non agricultural events.

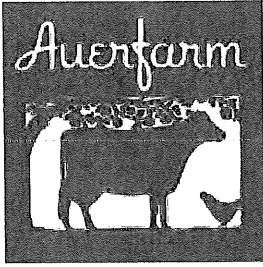
During Covid -19, 40% of farm/nature based non profits closed their doors permanently. While Auerfarm remains open, we struggle daily to remain financially viable. The change in zoning would allow Auerfarm to diversify somewhat, enabling us to better serve our community.

The proposed zoning changes must apply to all farms in Bloomfield. It is the use of the land that is regulated, not the identity of the owner.

Supporting the farms in Bloomfield strengthens our community and allows the farms to remain an important part of the rural character. The proposed zoning allows for our farms to diversify; increasing their viability.

Please support the proposed regulations.

Respectfully,



Erica Fearn, CAE

Executive Director, 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm Inc.

860.242.7144

efearn@auerfarm.org

158 Auer Farm Road
Bloomfield, CT 06002

auerfarm.org



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Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Ray Valade <valaderay@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:21 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: 22.05.19 Auerfarm Special Meeting Zoning Proposal

We support Auerfarm and the proposed zoning amendment that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, the ability to have a farm store – where it would sell their farm products grown by their students, expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm and host a limited number of non agricultural events.

We and our family have enjoyed using their facilities and our granddaughter has participated in many after school activities there.

We reside at 291 Oliver Way, Bloomfield.

Thank you,

Ray & Sue Valade

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Maureen Casey <mecasey62@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:19 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Supporting the proposed zoning amendment

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the zoning changes that will allow Auerfarm to hold a limited number of agricultural events, the ability to have a farm store, the ability to expand the outdoor recreational activities that are compatible with the farm and lastly the ability to host a limited number of non agricultural events.

The change in zoning would directly affect my family and my three daughters. All of my children have enjoyed many programs including The after school Enrichment Camp and the Summer Camp program. The financial security and the viability of these programs of Auer Farm are very important to us!

Thank you for your time.

Warm regards,

Maureen and Brian Casey

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: frank merblum <sfmerb@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:18 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Amendment

Erica,

My wife and I support the Auerfarm amendment.

Good luck !

Frank & Susan Merblum
13 Butternut Drive
Bloomfield, Ct 06002

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: VICTOR C HERSON <vherson@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 4:09 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: Agritourism Amendment
Attachments: USDA ERS - Agritourism Allows Farms To ...tential Benefits for Rural Communities.pdf

Dear Ms. Valentino:

I am pleased that the Town of Bloomfield is considering a proposed amendment to allow Agritourism. Bloomfield has a rich farming heritage and agritourism has the potential to support our few remaining active farms. Such benefits have been highlighted nationally by the United States Department of Agriculture (see attached).

Bloomfield cannot benefit from locally-produced foods without its local farms. This amendment is a wise investment in ensuring such farms remain sustainable.

Sincerely,

Victor Herson
President
Wintonbury Land Trust

Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez

From: Jacquelyn Coleman <jcoleman@ssmgt.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2022 4:09 PM
To: Jennifer Valentino-Rodriguez
Subject: AIER farm

Expressing my support for Auerfarm zoning change. The farm is a major asset to the town that we are lucky to have so close to heavily populated and urban environments.

Jacquelyn Coleman
23 Walt's Hill
Bloomfield

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